BING

Edited by REG BRISTO

MARCH

NO.

91

1989

THE
INTERNATIONAL
CROSBY CIRCLE

The previous issue of BING contained the splendid idea of JOHN MARSHALL towards funding the October IN MEMORIAM notice for Bing in 1989. This was to produce a tape of the estimable ERIC VINCENT singing a dozen songs to John's own keyboard accompaniment. This cost £2.75 of which no less than £2.00 went directly to the memorial notice fund. This notice appears, of course, in the American showbiz paper, VARIETY, which is not only highly prestigious but read worldwide.

If we have deciphered John's latest communication correctly (his correspondents will know that John writes in a kind of convoluted coded style which requires 'unscrambling' in the way of war-time spy reports!) the response to the idea was encouraging to the extent that £110 has been added to the fund.

The offer remains open and other contributions are most certainly welcome. Insertions in VARIETY, especially those of an arresting nature, are expensive. All purchasers of the tape and other contributors will have their names ONLY (not amounts) listed in the September issue of BING.

John voluntarily undertakes the task of this annual tribute to Bing in October on behalf of all of us and deserves, therefore, wide support.

We are extremely saddened to learn that BILL WARLEY, 113 Sharp St., HULL is a sick man - to the extent that he will shortly be entering a nursing home. He has a problem additional to that - he has virtually a houseful of Crosbyana - LPs, other records, magazines, photos, books, tapes - hundred of LPs, cassettes, dance-band LPs. and so on which he feels he must now dispose of. If anyone on Humberside (or elsewhere) can help Bill he will be very grateful indeed. We imagine parcelling up may be beyond him. Please do what you can.....

We hope this issue reaches you ere March is out - and not on April Fools' Day! It has been produced in the face of a degree of adversity processed pages delayed, supplies delayed, Mrs. B. with a cataract/ implant eye operation occasioning considerable domestic disruption...

No. 91 March, 1989

BING

Quarterley magazine of
THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

Editor:Secretary: REG BRISTO,
7 Greenmeadow Close, St. Dials,
CWMBRAN, GWENT, NP44 4PJ

Annual subscription bringing four issues post paid £4.00 European members: £5.00 sterling, please.

American/Canadian members 12 dollars airmail; 8 dollars surface mail. Australian their equivalent of £6.00.

Dollar bills are proving a good means. Cheques(checks) on local bankds NOT acceptable unless there is a UK office

Tape/disc consultant: LIONEL PAIRPOINT, 86 Ellesmere Aven., Mill Hill, London, N.W.7

Film Consultants: FRED REYNOLDS, 69 Heathmere Avenue, Yardley, Birmingham, B25 8RQ

Chief Publicist: LESLIE GAYLOR, 114 Medina Avenue, Isle of Wight, PO30 1HG

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Please note that it was found necessary to transpose pages 27 and 28; the latter CONTINUES on 29.

Christmas brought the usual tit-bits of WHITE CHRISTMAS folk-lore! Most concentrated on the phenomenal sales of Bing's rendering of the song but we felt things were getting vastly out of hand when one paper reported that sales of this record now totalled 171 million copies IN AMERICA ALONE ! This is a figure considerably in excess of the total population of the States ! As we've often said, it is now impossible to compute, even, just how many records have been sold as the track (commercial version and radio version) has been issued in so many ways by so many different companies, legitimate and pirate. Add to that the fact that the big companies' records are, to say the least, extremely sketchy. Sufficient to say that it remains, of course, the biggest-selling record in the history of the industry.

We also read that the film of the same name was being shewn in 15 different countries over the Yuletide holiday - tho' not in Britain. But as you will read, it WAS shewn on cable TV here several times.

Then there is that remarkable story of the Chicago 'loonies' - see page 26. Getting Crosbyana a bad, silly, name....

A "X" IN THE BOX OPPOSITE INDICATES YOUR ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION IS NOW DUE AND EARLY REMITTANCE IS OF CONSIDERABLE ASSISTANCE. [ ]

EDITORIAL

Several members wrote following the December issue, expressing mild surprise that we hadn't seen fit to make reference to the fact that it was issue No. 90. They felt it was a milestone and might have merited, even, a self-congratulatory reference! Indeed, it was a milestone and one of which we might feel a little pride but self-congratulations are out! Never was a strongpoint with us..... we're just privileged to be the means of helping to maintain the memory of the splendid Bing Crosby and all he stood for, and meant to us. We didn't really notice the number; our head was down, as usual, plodding away thinking of the NEXT issue. This one!

We do feel, apropos the Christmas issue, that we might modify some of our strictures on the Post Office. It seems most members got the issue before Christmas; some indeed say they had the pleasure of having it drop thro' the letter-box actually on Christmas Eve. Cutting it fine - but they did a good job. We refer to UK members, of course. There was no question alas of those overseas getting it for the holiday.

Reverting, however, to the "No. 90 issue" theme it is worth pointing out that it has been a two-way achievement. In other words we're appreciative of the large number of members who have been with us throughout those ninety issues. Their loyalty to us, and more importantly, to Bing is well worth recording.

We did have one rather wry reflection when the No. 90 issue was brought home to us. And that was that we took on the job on a temporary basis. Nearly 20 years ago ! Where have all the years gone we might well ask ?

Finally, that we have paid our tribute to those who have stuck with us all thro' the years does not mean we do not also appreciate those admirers of Bing who have joined us over the years and demonstrated their interest and loyalty.

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LIFE TIME

LIFE TIME PRODUCTIONS INTERNATIONAL

17 January 1989

REG BRISTO,
The International Crosby Circle.

Dear Mr. Bristo,

I am researching a major new seven-part television series called Idols of the 20th Century, to be broadcast in 1990. In it we will be looking at the major idols of six different areas - Screen, Music, Sport, Religion, Politics and Royalty.

As well as the stars themselves, we will also be focussing on their fans and followers, their reasons for becoming involved with a particular Idol and the way they express their admiration for them.

Bing Crosby is one of the Idols we will be including in the series. Your club should provide us with valuable information for the Music episode. Would it be possible for you to send us details of your club - number of members, activities, events, and so on. Does the club own any memorabilia or archive footage of Bing Crosby. Or do you have any members with special collections or souvenirs etc?

We will be filming later this year and will be looking for special events to cover and people to interview who will represent the fans of the idols.

Thank you for your help. I very much look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

YINKA THOMAS.

LIFETIME PRODUCTIONS INTERNATIONAL
LTD.
Suffolk House, 1-8 Whitfield Place,
London, W1P 5SF

So, this seems a great opportunity for members to take part in, and certainly support, what may prove to be a real tribute to Bing. It is likely that this is the same concern that, almost 30 years ago, was responsible for the series, followed by Bing's double album, HOW THE WEST WAS WON.

Our reply is given on the next page; it will be noted we have not given any names or addresses with the exception of Leslie Gaylor's who is, of course, now internationally known for his Crosby interests. Others will make their own decosion as to whether or not they can make a substantial, worthwhile contribution to what should prove a milestone in Crosbyana.

Dear Yinka,

Many thanks for your letter; may I firstly point out that while dated 12 January it was not posted until 21 February and it was received here 26 February. This will explain any delay.

Needless to say, we are delighted that it is proposed to include Bing Crosby in your series, IDOLS OF THE 20TH CENTURY. Assuredly Mr. Crosby is an automatic selection. We live in a forgetful, often uncaring, kind of world but there is no doubting the impact he had on this century. Many tributes, of course, have been paid Bing, especially in the years since his death in 1977 in publications, books, radio and television. None of them, however, has really managed to comprehensively give Bing his rightful due. We hope, therefore, you will repair the omission !

This may, of course, be due to the sheer magnitude of Bing's career and the vast scope of his achievements. In your categories, for example, Bing was pre-eminent on the SCREEN, in MUSIC, and certainly in SPORT. In fact, it is safe to say that whatever Mr. C. undertook it was successful. He was, it is often claimed, an unofficial ambassador for America. He might easily have been a professional diplomat, such was his erudite and wide-ranging view of life.

Pre-eminently, to repeat ourselves, we think of him as a singer - one who transformed the art of popular singing. Most of his famous contemporaries and successors have gladly and widely acknowledged this.

MUSIC: Starting as an exuberant member of a duo on music-hall, Bing quickly became famous with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra. He burst upon radio like a meteor with his seemingly easy, informal, way of presenting songs of the day. Later he began to sing songs such as HOME ON THE RANGE, I LOVE YOU TRULY, JUST A'WEARYING FOR you, carols, hymns, westerns, Hawaiians etc. etc. Songs not normally associated with a singer who came from the dance-band ranks quite often.

> PERHAPS THIS WAS THE FACTOR THAT MADE BING SUCH A UNIVERSAL FAVOURITE. HIS DEEP-TONED ATTRACTIVE VOICE, SINGING IN SUCH APPEALING FASHION MADE HIM THE FAVOURITE OF EVERYONE - NOT JUST TEEN-AGERS (as is so often the case today), not the young alone either, but the older people including those who hitherto who had considered their main interest was in classics, concert and operatic singers. Bing was popular with all sections of the public - worldwide at that.

SCREEN: His career on the large screen is well known -

(Cont on page 19)

ALTERNATE BING CROSBY

THE BOOK OF
'ALTERNATE'
BING CROSBY
TAKES
****

BY

COLIN PUGH

(29 Picton Street, Montpelier,
BRISTOL BS6 5PZ, England)

****

PUBLISHED BY JOHN JOYCE

("Ravenswood House",
Chowdene Bank, Low Fell,
GATESHEAD, Tyne & Wear,
NE9 6JP)

This is the book that analyses the various differences in Bing's recordings of a particular song, 'takes' being the term of the recording industry to signify the number of times the song was played/sung to achieve what was considered an issuable version; as you will see, however, sometimes the differences were so minor as not to matter unduly which take was finally issued. And quite often more than one take was actually issued. There would be no need for this book otherwise!

> It has been commonly declared that Bing became known as "One-take Crosby". An excellent label, even if not exactly true as Colin amply demonstrates. The one-take appellation became more accurate, of course, with the demise of the 78rpm records. With the advent of tape and micro-groove issues, all kinds of engineering jiggery-pokery became possible, so that if Bing was more than anxious to get off to the golf-course he could, in effect, say: "That's my bit - do what you will with it. I'm off!"

Many members will perceive that ALTERNATE BING CROSBY has already appeared for we (ICC) published it in our own humble fashion. It was welcomed by members to the extent that Colin Pugh has been encouraged to considerably enlarge the records covered.

> Now the book, numbering 159 pages, makes its appearance in full, professional, high-quality style. Hardback coloured blue, with gold lettering down the spine. Paper is high quality, too. It makes an absorbing and very worthwhile companion volume to BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD.

Now, it has to be conceded there are those who - to coin a phrase - couldn't care less about the 'take' angle. If they have a particular song they cherish they are well satisfied. They are not concerned that Bing may sing a certain word on two notes instead of one, or raise his voice at another time rather than lowering it. Fair enough, they accept that Bing Crosby seems to be incapable of singing a song a second or third time in the precise manner he first performed it. One of his many charismatic assets.

But to others the take business is of absorbing interest - and once again, we say Fair Comment. For we have oft-said that it is up to anyone to get what

they want from Crosbyana. And the research into this aspect of Bing's recordings is, for them, a fascinating and often rewarding interest. To come across an unlisted, apparently new 'take' is on a par with coming across a mint copy of SOFT LIGHTS AND SWEET MUSIC or SOUTHERN MEDLEY !

> As in the earlier edition, COLIN PUGH has displayed incredible diligence in his split-second timing of the variations - where they occur on the recording.

In this connection we often think, when 'takes' are under discussion, of the late BOB ROBERTS of Chatham, who was so interested in the subject that he was in the habit of playing two records simultaneously on different players, of course, to detect some of the take-changes. This perhaps illustrates how difficult it can be! We also learned that his Wife, Vera, could be out in the kitchen at some household chore but would call out to Bob: "That's a different 'take'!" And usually it was.

So, take research is a very legitimate and fascinating aspect of Crosbyana. If you are one of those fascinated this is the book; it contains approximately 30 per cent more information than the original edition as well as photographs of rare record labels. The whole meaning of 'takes' is explained in detail, besides a lot more information on Bing's recordings.

The volume is obtainable only from the publisher, address above. The price perhaps reflects the quality of the book which is:

UK	£5.50p	
USA	£8.50	airmail postage.
USA	£6.60	surface postage.
EUROPE	£6.20	
JAPAN	as for USA.	
AUSTRALIA	£9.20	airmail postage.
AUSTRALIA	£6.80	surface postage.

These prices include postage/packing; and remittances are required in sterling please.

It may be worth mentioning that we are not profoundly interested in the 'take' facet; even so, we found ALTERNATE BING CROSBY quite a fascinating companion! The one time we did find interest was when the so-called " B" version of that incredible recording, MR. GALLAGHER & MR. SHEAN appeared on an Ace of Hearts (Decca) album in the 60s ('AMONG MY SOUVENIRS' AH 90) Whether or not this ranked as a different 'take' exercised our mind. It amounted, in our opinion, to an entirely different performance. Bing and Johnny Mercer profoundly altered the lyrics from the "A" recording that was the general issue. More than that, the accompaniment (Victor Young's Small Fryers) seem to play an entirely different orchestration, with the instrumental solos completely different.

> The "B" version just described was, in our view, very much inferior to the "A" we had delighted in for years - since 1939 in fact. And it was easy to reason why the "A" was the main issue.

Bing's incredibly rhythmic extemporising on this old vaudeville song, with able assistance from Johnny Mercer still leaves me amazed, almost breathless! 50 years on !

SPECIAL TO ROSIE

VET'S CHOICE!

"LET MY HEART FALL INTO CARELESS HANDS". Little Rosie's voice piped in my ear as I guided my car over a stretch of rutted road. I had singing now to cheer the hours of driving.

This charming little story came from THE BEST OF JAMES HERRIOT, the vet. whose stories and memoirs have made such a captivating TV series apart from the pleasure his books have given. If we knew the precise origin of this particular item we would gladly and gratefully acknowledge the source.

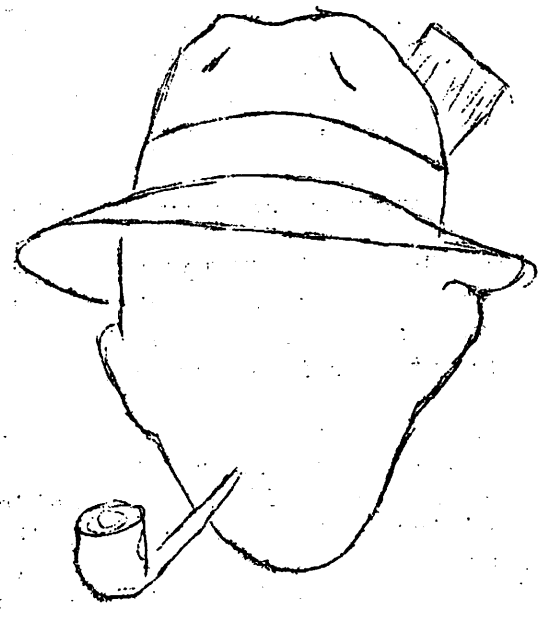
I was on my way to dress a wound on a cow's back and it was nice to hear the singing. But it was beginning to dawn on me that something better still was happening. I was starting all over again with another child. When Jimmy went to school I missed his company in the car but I did not realise that the whole thing was going to begin again with Rosie.

The intense pleasure of showing them the farm animals and seeing their growing wonder at the things of the countryside; the childish chatter which never palled, the fun and the laughter which lightened my days - it all happened twice to me.

The singing had originated in the purchase of a radiogram. Music had always meant a lot to me and I owned a record player which gave me a lot of pleasure. Still, I felt I wanted something better, some means of reproducing more faithfully the sound of my favourite orchestras, singers, instrumentalists.

Hi-fi outfits hadn't been heard of at that time, nor stereo, nor wrap-around sound nor any of the other things which have revolutionised the world of listening. The best the music-lover could do was to get a good radiogram.

After much agonising and reading of pamphlets and listening to advice from many quarters I narrowed the list down to three models and made my choice by having them brought round to Skeldale House and playing the opening of the Beethoven Violin Concerto on one after the other, again and again. I must have driven the two men from the electric shop nearly mad but at the end there was no doubt left in my mind.



It had to be the Murphy, a handsome piece of furniture with a louvred front and graceful legs and it bellowed out the full volume of the Philharmonic Orchestra without a trace of muzziness. I was enchanted with it, but there was one snag, it cost over ninety pounds and that was an awful lot of money in 1950.

"Helen," I said when we had installed it in the sitting-room. "We've got

to look after this thing. The kids can put records on my old player but we must keep them away from the Murphy."

> Foolish words. The very next day as I came in the front door the passage was echoing with YIPPIE AY OOOOH, YIPPEE AY AAAAY, GHOST RIDERS IN THE SKYYYY! It was Bing Crosby's back-up choir belting out the other side of CARELESS HANDS record and the Murphy was giving it full value.

I peeped round the sitting-room door. GHOST RIDERS had come to an end and with her chubby little hands Rosie removed the record, placed it in its cover and marched, pig-tails swinging, to the record cabinet. She selected another disc and was halfway across the floor when I waylaid her.

> "Which one is that?" I asked.
>
> "THE LITTLE GINGERBREAD MAN," she replied.

I looked at the label. It was, too, and how did she know, because I had a whole array of these childrens' records and many of them looked exactly the same. The same colour, the same grouping of words, and Rosie at the age of three could not read.

She fitted the disc expertly on the turntable and set it going. I listened to THE LITTLE GINGERBREAD MAN right through and watched as she picked out another record.

I looked over her shoulder. "What is it this time?". "TUBBY THE TUBA". And indeed it was. I had a hour to spare and Rosie gave me a recital. We went through UNCLE MAC'S NURSERY RHYMES, THE HAPPY PRINCE, PETER AND THE WOLF, and many of the immortal Bing to whom I was, and am, devoted. I was intrigued to find that her favourite Crosby record was not PLEASE, or HOW DEEP IS THE OCEAN or his other classics but CARELESS HANDS. This one had something special for her.

At the end of the session I decided that it was fruitless to try to keep Rosie and the Murphy apart. Whenever she was not out with me she played with the radiogram. It was her toy.

> It all turned out for the best, too, because she did my precious acquisition no harm and when she came with me on my rounds she sang the things she had played so often and which were word perfect in her mind. And I really loved that singing.
>
> CARELESS HANDS soon became my favourite, too.

Editor: So, JAMES HERRIOT is definitely "one of us"! And no doubt his daughter Rosie, now we imagine a mother herself. The story will be so evocative to many others we feel sure. How well we remember the agony Mr. Herriot describes concerning the choice of a radiogram.

My goodness, what a step forward that was! It was our third stage - a wind-up leatherette gramophone was first. Then the home-made wireless built from a blue-print in AMATEUR WIRELESS which subsequently enabled us to buy a new-fangled 'pick up' which, replacing the soundbox on the Columbia portabe, allowed us to play our precious records through the wireless. The pick-up, I remember, cost 5/- - 25p. We thought this pretty marvellous at the time. Then came the radiogram! We settled on a Burgoyne, should anyone remember

that name and model. This also was a handsome piece of very dark red furniture. And what a sound! Wonder what it would seem like today though, in this age of hi-fi and compact discs? Its still around, I believe, for visiting a member of the family in south-east London in the 60s it was still there. We were a lot earlier than Mr. Herriot for it was in 1934 when we purchased our Burgoyne (it was a family co-operative expense!)

> I recall . . arriving home on leave during the War, looking forward to playing the Bing 78s - to find that it was 'out of action'. Though no technician, it was quickly apparent that a wire had broken in the pick-up arm. Desperate, and without a soldering iron, I heated a poker and so chow rejoined the ends! The situation was, thankfully, saved. And that "repair" was still holding 20 years later.....

And coincidence went even further, for three decades later I found that my grandson, at the age of 4, could not only manipulate a cassette deck (he had great fun with the fast-forward and reverse!) but, like Rosie, tho' unable to read, could unerring pick out the cassette he wanted. His favourite, however, included WHIFFENPOOF SONG and TEDDY BEAR'S PICNIC. The animal content, perhaps.

GATESHEAD - MAY 12TH!

The North-East is girding itself for springtime and setting the pace for other areas. Following our announcement of the MURPHY-WARMAN SHOW, the next event will be one of the now familiar evenings at THE SWALLOW HOTEL (formerly THE FIVE BRIDGES HOTEL) in Gateshead on May 12th. It will start at 6.30pm. The evening will follow the usual format of records, tapes, video showings, quizzes - and chat. The meal sounds particularly intriguing! Pearls of chilled honeydew melon.....succulent beefsteak, casseroled with button onions, bacon and mushrooms in a rich wine and tomato sauce with roast potatoes and buttered carrots. Coffee seems an anti-climax !

> Attendance is not restricted to those in the NORTH-EAST; overnight accommodation can be arranged at a cost of £16.50 for bed and breakfast. Please indicate if this is required when obtaining tickets from either:
>
> JOHN JOYCE, Ravenswood House, Chowdene Bank, Low Fell, GATESHEAD, TYNE & WEAR NE9 6JP (Phone 4878761)
>
> or
>
> PHIL MORGAN, 5 Sanderson Road, Jesmond, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE NE2 2BR

Tickets, fully inclusive of the meal, are £7.25p.

IF THE "X" APPEARS IN THE BOX ON PAGE 3 EARLY REMITTANCE OF YOUR ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION IS OF TREMENDOUS HELP....

BING SINGING "COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS" WAS HEARD FREQUENTLY DURING A TV PROGRAMME ON - APPROPRIATELY - INSOMNIA !

CELLULOID CROSBY

BY KEITH PARKINSON

I AM prompted to resurrect this rather irregular column following the Editor's comments about Bing's "coloured" films. It also provides me with an opportunity to mention two of Bing's short film appearances not documented in Fred Reynold's excellent ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD films book.

As far as I know, none of Bing's black and white films have been released in coloured versions either here or in the USA. Ted Turner, who owns the rights to several black and white films is the one person who has done this in order to 'enhance' the appeal of the films. It has also enabled him to charge the television companies higher rates for transmission rights to such black and white classics as ITS A WONDERFUL LIFE. Video cassette versions of the computer-coloured films are also made available. Most film makers and true movie buffs protested against this move. Although it is possible to remove colour from the screen of your own television set they argue that the monochrome clariety of the film suffers from the processing.

> So far Paramount's catalogue, which contains the vast majority of Bing's screen footage, has not fallen victim to Turner's grasp and because the cost of this technical 'improvement' is expensive it is not likely that the Hollywood studios will tamper with their own archive material until they are certain that public demand justifies the additional expense.

Also mentioned was 'KING OF JAZZ' in the context of hand tinting. "KING OF JAZZ' was filmed in a two-colour technicolour process. It was the best colour process developed at the time and it was used successfully with silent films as well as for colour sequences in early talkies. The last features in two-colour technicolor were made around 1932. By then the technicolor corporation had successfully perfected a three-colour technique which was used for short subjects until 1936 when features were shot in the process. Bing had to wait unril "DIXIE" in 1942 before Paramount showed him in full colour in a major feature. Before that, in 1936, he was seen in colour in the short "STAR NIGHT AT THE COCOANUT GROVE", made by M-G-M.

Details on the two previously undocumented short films in which Bing appears are:

SCREEN SNAPSHOTS No. 9 (1939)

> Columbia Pictures had a series of ten-minute 'fillers' which featured Hollywood personalities at play. Ralph Straub produced and directed most of these and they were then released alongside Columbia feature films. I remember them as part of supporting programmes well in the 1950s. "Screen Snapshots No. 9" was released to cinemas in the States on 12 May, 1939. Its them was, as usual, the stars 'off-dity' and relaxing. It concentrated on the San Fernando Valley Horse Show and the personalities filmed were in the main either part-owners of race-horses or those who spent time (and money) at the track following the sport as a hobby. In the film's ten minute

running time Bing is shown along with celebrities such as Joe E. Brown, Virginia Bruce, Allan Jones, The Three Stooges, Robert Young, Bill Boyd, Robert Taylor, Clarke Gable and Carole Lombard. The film has no musical content.

SHOW BUSINESS AT WAR (1943)

20th Century-Fox had a popular 'MARCH OF TIME' series directed by Louis de Rochemont and produced by the Editors of "TIME" magazine. A cross between a conventional newsreel and topical documentary each issue concentrated on a specific topic. This title, Volume IX, Issue No. 10, was devoted to a study of the assistance given by entertainers to the war effort. With the exception of some never-before-screened footage of Carole Lombard, all the film was expressly taken for this report. Bing appeared briefly together with many major American entertainers including Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra, Jack Benny, Bob Hope, Irving Berlin, James Cagney, W. C. Fields, Alfred Hitchcock, Clark Gable, The Mills Brothers, Orson Welles and Mickey Rooney. The film's running time was 17 minutes.

Editor: Thanks to several members who pointed out that the colour sequence of Bing in Barry Norman's HOLLYWOOD GREATS TV tribute came from the 1936 STAR NIGHT AT THE COCOANUT GROVE and was not, as we erroneously deduced, a computerised-colour excerpt from a Mack Sennett short.

Did any of our members happen, inadvertently for sure, to view the so-called BRITS AWARDS - awards in the British gramophone record industry? We didn't but we did hear about the wholesale criticism that was levell - no, HURLED at it - tatty, witless presentation, amateurish and so on. We wonder: why all the fuss? It completely complemented the "music" it was dedicated to, and demonstrated in no uncertain fashion what a talentless, shoddy business modern 'pop' has become.

THE BING CROSBY SHOW

FRANK MURPHY & SAM WARMAN present
An illustrated tribute to BING CROSBY on Slides & Audio

Bing made his first record in October 1926 and his last in October 1977 - during those 51 years he sang countless thousands of songs on radio - records - films - TV Our programme will bring back some of the memories of these songs.

OUR CROSBY PROGRAMME WILL BE WITH YOU ON SATURDAY MAY 6TH AT THE MASONIC HALL, WALLSEND, TYNE & WEAR, commencing at 2pm to 9.30pm approx. Dinner at 6pm Tickets £5.00 from FRANK MURPHY, 32 Ferndale Avenue, Wallsend, Tyne & Wear NE28 7NE

As received from The New Bing Crosby Colour Photo Club: We're always prepared to publicise the furtherance of Crosbyana.

POPE, BENNY

BY
FRED REYNOLDS

You are possibly unaware that on the afternoon of 4th December last you may have been among those chastised by one of our better known radio disc-jockeys. If, like me, you are not a fervent admirer of the species D J Parasitus you are probably more usefully employed during early Sunday afternoons than wasting time listening to inane chatter, perhaps taking a post-prandial nod or drying the dishes. It so happened, however, that on that particular day my coffee was a little stronger than usual and kept me awake. Benny Green, for it was no less than he, commenced his programme with some tracks from the JONZO LP (Vol 11). Needless to say, no DJ worth his pepper - and Benny has no lack of pungency - will never resist the temptation to offer his opinion, however uninformed or even misinformed it may be.

First, however, an examination of Mr. Green's credentials reveals an erstwhile, moderately successful saxophone player who in middle age or later wisely prefers penning articles and putting on gramophone records to staying up in smoky cellars, attics, or somewhere in between, until two or three o'clock in the morning and, incidentally, no doubt receiving a fatter income from it. Second, declaring my own interests I point out that (a) I normally don't care a hoot jot, fig or button what opinions a DJ holds and remain safe, happy and smug in the certain knowledge that if his opinions disagree in any way with mine he must be barmy, and (b) his sweeping criticism of Crosby fans did not, because I support JONZO, include me. My observations, therefore, are entirely disinterested.

The Crosby lobby, said Mr. Green (referring to his mail) was the largest of all and yet JONZO producer, John McNicholas, had written to him and mentioned that the Chronological series could do with a sales boost (or words to that effect). "But where," wailed the ubiquitous Benny, "are the Crosby fans when they are needed?" A fair point you may think and it would please me no end if every member of all the Crosby Societies and a large chunk of the general public all bought a copy of every volume as it was issued. Let us, however, examine the position more closely.

The age of the majority of Crosby fans is commensurate with the period of his - Bing's - professional supremacy and, accordingly, more and more are reaching the time when they become dependant upon a state pension. Unfortunately, JONZO records cannot be produced cheaply - they are certainly not budget-priced - and it may well be that as retirement age is reached difficulty is experienced in finding the wherewithal to afford all the luxuries one would like. Furthermore Mr. Green takes no account of the fact that very many Crosby followers already have in their possession all, or much of, the material being presented. It is a pity he couldn't have thought of these simple facts before broadcasting his strictures.

You may wonder why I haven't written, as others do, directly to the offending Mr. Green. Well, for one thing the Post Office line of communication is too short a barge-pole between any DJ (with perhaps a couple of notable exceptions) and myself and, for another, I am content to leave that procedure to those whose temperament is better able than mine to benefit from association with radio and TV 'personalities'. When I find myself writing to DJ's I shall know that I am ready for collection by the men in white coats.

The Crosby lobby should not feel that it has been singled out by Mr. Green

for he aims his loquacious tone indiscriminately; anyone featured in his programme is lucky indeed to escape a scathing remarkand it is difficult to resist (and I shall not even try) the feeling that he considers himself to be a latter-day Pope (Alexander), I mean, not John Paul II). As the Crosby recordings were the first to be played on the programme, Bing was the first to suffer tongue-lash: Mr. Green's feelings about him, we learned, are "ambivalent" and, more specifically, he considers that the 1931 recording of STARDUST is completely spoiled by the "boo-booing" and whistling. I must say here that I agree with Mr. Green to the extent that these ornamentations do nothing to enhance the proceedings although all that goes before is a delight. What the critic does not say, however, is that at this very early stage of a solo career Bing was experimenting and seeking new means of expression in the field of popular singing. Some of his endeavours succeeded and some didn't but within a few short years he had discarded the superfluous traits. Mr. Green is intelligent, knowledgeable and articulate, and I do not think for one moment that his neglect to reveal perspective was through his being uninformed. Rather, and this is borne out by subsequent remarks about others, he seems determined to damage his own hosts in finding irresistible the urge to sound clever. His opinions are often ill-considered and frequently spiced with a little malice, which is strange when it is recalled that he so admired the benign humour of P G Wodehouse.

Crosby, he claimed, without expansion, comes between Jolson and Sinatra; whether he was referring to age, style or talent remains undisclosed but it would be fair to give him two marks out of three. Incidentally, I believe that Mr. Green is an ardent admirer of Frank Sinatra - a choice he is well entitled to make - and his idol is one of the few artists on whom he lavishes unrestricted praise. I recall a past occasion when the remarks were so laudatory that at first I thought I had mistakenly tuned into a religious programme where someone was being canonised. (Perhaps, after all, it is the Vatican about which he has delusions).

Mr. Green next turned his attention to Howard Dietz and criticised a line that the lyricist had written for DANCING IN THE DARK, sneering that anyone who tried "waltzing in the dark" would meet with a minor disaster. DJs come in assorted styles: smarmy, soppy, slick or stupid and Mr. Green falls into only one of those categories. I don't believe that he is silly enough to misunderstand that what Dietz wrote was a metaphor and that nothing was sacrificed by the poetic alliteration of "waltsing in the wonder of why we're here"; the actual words have no mention here of "in the dark". It is a good example of Mr. Green's wit-picking; master of the half-truth, he is more skilful in truth economy than is Lord Armstrong.

Listeners were smugly informed that Paul Weston and Jo Stafford must be embarrassed to know that they are better known for their occasional satirical excursions, as Jonathan and Darlene Edwards, than they are as serious artists. The shike remark, made at the expense of veracity, was apparently justified on the grounds that a little humiliation never hurt anyone.

A record was played of a female singer whose name, unfamiliar to me, I have now forgotten (If anyone can enlighten me I shall be obliged). It seemed that a record of hers had been played the previous week and, after the faint praise that damned (Mr. Green's alter ego must be Alexander) came a tart introduction on the change of style. "There must be two of them," he scoffed. This was a recurring theme through the programme. After flaying Perry Botkin he referred to an LP that had been arranged, not to his liking, by Perry Botkin Jr. " No," gasping dramatically and no doubt throwing up his hands in mock horror, "there's two of them."

But even Mr. Green didn't have the temerity to suggest that there is, never was, or ever will be another Bing Crosby.

I shall continue occasionally to listen to Mr. Green for his acerbic wit if not his opinions. He is to be enjoyed if one regards him as a good comedian but an unreliable informant.

FRED REYNOLDS.

Editor: Fred is a braver man than I -

I caught him once in a programme when he was endeavouring to be nice; even so I found him so obnoxious that no one would even consider the financial recomepsnse I would demand for listening to him again. Enough, for me, of Mr. Green.

But the question of JONZO records and support thereof IS of interest. We passed comment in the previous issue about (a) the cost, and (b) the most unfortunate circumstance of the LP being overtaken in a technological sense, by the Compact Disc. Ignoring the jibe about the Crosby 'lobby' we do nevertheless wonder just how that lobby becomes aware - if it does - of the Jonzo records?

It seems that most people ontain the albums from the Middlesex address of John McNicholas; we have never seen a Chronological Bing Crosby album in a shop but appreciate this does not necessarily mean no shop ever displays them. But nowhere in South Wales and, as we think likely, anywhere else.

So, how are the JONZO albums being projected to a wide audience which would certainly include many potential buyers who do NOT subscribe to the various Crosby societies? Just how does the wide record-buyihg public learn of JONZO records? Laying that issue aside for a moment, buying them through the mail adds £1.40 to the already fairly high price - no mean consideration in view of what Fred says above about pensioner Crosby fans.

But using a distributor would also mean "another mouth to feed"; in other words he would want his cut of the price so it may be a cl ft stick that John McNicholas finds himself in.

And it is notorious that distribution is the bugbear in the trade these days. Retailers are more concerned with the "fast buck" of the Top Ten business; they are vastly aided and abetted in this attitude by the young reps. A retailer needs persuasion to take in albums he may not sell within a day or two. So, without any jibes from Green or anyone else, there is a real problem which, we are sure, John McN is most conversant.

Compact discs may be the salvation of the great idea of producing all of Bing's commercial recordings in chronological order. No doubt the producers have, or are, in the process of rethinking the possibility. This would not only come abreast with modern technology for the best possible sound reproduction but would speed up the process for around 22 or even 24 tracks could be accommodated on a CD. And the cost should not be all that different.

Apropos this suggestion it may be appropriate at this stage to reproduce an item in SOUND NEWS of January 1989:

FINAL VINYL

RECORD PRODUCTION TO END

Tokyo: Sony, owners of CBS Records, is to cease production of the vinyl disc from April this year.

At a recent Japanese press conference a Sony spokesman emphasised the sonic advantages of CD and DAT, and stated that CBS Records looks to CD for 90 per cent of its turnover. The company was not able to give an exact date for the final vinyl.

This is an enigmatic statement to be sure; we've always thought CBS to be a totally monolithic pillar in the American entertainment industry. Its a surprise, therefore, to find that Sony owns it! We don't know, however, whether this refers only to the Japanese end of the concern, and therefore, only production of LPs in Japan will cease.

But it can certainly be taken as the writing on the wall for the LP record all over the world. It is on its way out. It doesn't mean, naturally, that you will be unable to play treasured LPs....but, further acquisitions will obviously be a different matter.

No sooner had we digested Fred Reynolds's piece above that - well, he must be a glutton for punishment or a masochist supreme! In short, we have :

POPE, BENNY (Continued)

A couple of weeks after the above art-

icle was written, having an hour to spare and beset with lethargy, I turned to the 'Radio Times' to see what mental refreshment was on offer. BBC 2 was showing 'Maths: Non-Tucidean Geometry', shortly to be followed by 'Biology: The Vertebrate Kidney', and the BBC 1 alternative was a gentleman styling himself Jimmy Cricket. As my preferences lay somewhere between these very wide extremities I searched further and found that a Benny Green programme was about to start on the radio. He didn't, in fact, have much to do with it, merely making the introductory and concluding remarks, but the little that he did say strengthened my opinion of him.

The programme was a recording of a concert given by Frank Sinatra at the Re-Union Centre in Dallas, Texas, on 24th October, 1987. Benny chose his words as carefully as one would expect and the casual listener would almost certainly imagine that Mr. Green was "on-the-spot". It seems to me, however, that even the BBC at its most extravagant could hardly justify the expense of sending a representative all that way solely for the purpose of providing half-a-dozen sentences. Of course, he didn't say that he was there but neither did he say that he wasn't and the whole tenor of his remarks was to persuade the listeners that he was present. It isn't very important and I lay no particular blame to Benny Green as it seems that in order to provide the 'atmosphere' such procedure is regarded by producers as an acceptable deception. I wish that he had been there because some of the lavish praise might then have been excused by his being carried away by the aura engendered by his idol. (Many of us experienced this sort of thing at the Palladium in 1976 and 1977).

"Nothing," he said, referring to Sinatra, "has changed." Mr. Green is a professional writer and broadcaster and presumably understands words and knows the meaning of what he writes. If, therefore, he says that nothing has changed one can assume that that is what he means. As he is an ex-musician it is also fair to assume that he doesn't possess tin ears so that it is extremely difficult to imagine how he can possibly think that Mr. Sinatra's voice is, at the age of nearly seventy two is as good as it was in earlier times. This is not meant in anyway to criticise Frank Sinatra: to borrow a phrase I once heard Mr. Green use about Bing Crosby, he (Frank Sinatra) is possibly the best septugenarian singer today. To suggest, however, that his voice remains unchanged is ludicrous and I gently point out to Benny Green that all the organs necessary for voice production - the larynx, pharynx, disphragm, lungs, etc. - are just as susceptible to the ageing process as the rest of the anatomy and that Sinatra, no more than anyone else, can escape being a victim of natural deterioration. No more than could Crosby, Como, Ella or any other singer of whatever persuasion, popular, classical, concert or opera. The final, disastrous, even humiliating, tour of di Stefano and Callas is proof enough. Time seems, in fact, to have been not unkind to Frank Sinatra; from pictures that I have seen of him in recent years he looks (Kitty Kelley notwithstanding) more amiable, kinder, and altogether less aggressive than in his younger days. The suggestion, however, that his voice is the same as it was is to claim that he could walk on water which, if he were foolish enough to try, would result in his head and shoulders getting very wet indeed. Mr. Green, who should have known better, has fallen into the same trap that snared many a Crosby fan who endeavoured to prove devotion. The misplaced loyalty of saying that the ageing voice is "as good as ever" has the effect only of devaluing that voice when it was at its best and thus commits a disservice.

The extravagance of Benny Green's words are further demonstrated by his approbation for the way Sinatra "suddenly blurts out 'Light my fire, light my fire'. "There's no need," he says, "Sinatra's already lit his own." Perhaps, but at seventy-plus any man should be satisfied that the embers are still glowing. Mr. Green said also that even the most insignificant incidents of Sinatra's career should be preserved. He must, of course, know the meaning of the word "insignificant" and I wish him every success in his pursuit of the unimportant and the meaningless if that is how

he wishes to spend his time. It does seem, however, to be the obssession of a rabid fan rather than the attitude of an objective professional.

> In another programme I heard him describe a singer as "genius", an implicit invitation for his listeners to add her name to an illustrious list that includes Shakespeare, Mozart and Einstein. He was talking about Barbra Streisand.
>
> FRED REYNOLDS.

Editor: I've made no secret of the fact that I listen very little to the radio these days. Apart from the preponderance of what I term "caricature music" (modern pop) I find that even the so-called "middle-of-the-roaders" appear to treat their radio stint as an ego-trip. Much more important than the lack of knowledge, or taste, apparent is the lack of sincerity. There are, of course, honourable exceptions.

I learn that one of these "middle" men recently broadcast the astounding assertion that Ambrose, one of our most famous bandleaders of the 30s, often recorded under the name of BERTINI! Another bandleader, of course, who became quite legendary in the majestic ballrooms of Blackpool. Its a moot point which would make the most violent turn in their grave on hearing this remarkable piece of "information".

> Some may be mystified at Fred's reference above to KITTY KELLEY. She is the lady who wrote a "frank" and highly unflattering book - biography - of Sinatra, exposing his way of life and generally having little good to say about him. She at least had the honesty and integrity to write it while he was alive.... Sinatra made strenuous efforts to prevent publication of the book which nevertheless appeared late in 1987 or early 1988. So far as we know there has been no libel suit.

"EVERGREEN"

BRITAIN'S BRIGHTEST COUNTRY QUARTERLY £1.75p

A Miscellany of This & That & Things Gone By

How many of our members know of this bright, entertainining publication? We didn't until a member sent us a copy of the Winter 1987/88 issue (we're a little ashamed we've mislaid his accompanying note) It is a magazine the same size as READER'S DIGEST and, for that matter, follows similar lines with articles on this and that, usually nostalgic. Snippets of verse, interestir facts, etc. etc. very much on the lines of READER'S DIGEST. In this particular issue there was an 8-page tribute to Bing entitled EVERGREEN MELODIES. It was written by one PERCY BICKERDYKE and he assuredly knew his Bing! It had coloured photographs of song-sheets, e.g. BLUE OF THE NIGHT, SIERRA SUE, PENNIES FROM HEAVEN &c. as well as coloured photos of record sleeves as well as all kinds of pictures of Bing (and family) in excellent quality. Really excellent and a worthwhile item of Crosbyana.

EVERGREEN (a quarterly journal for all those proud of their British roots!) costs £8.00 for four issues, which follow the seasons of the year. Address is EVERGREEN, PO Box 52, Cheltenham, Glos. GL50 1YQ

Cont. from page 6:

- the legendary ROAD films with both Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour. His early films were merely trival vehicles for letting Bing sing to the delight of all. Later on, despite his own denigration, he showed rare acting ability and indeed won an OSCAR in 1944 for GOING MY WAY. And films such as COUNTRY GIRL and MAN ON FIRE, showed his enormous acting ability. He was, you may know, No. 1 Box office attraction for 10 consecutive years.

SPORT: His golfing ability too is well-known; it has been said by the world's top class players that Bing was of championship calibre. His fishing, too, was a big item and he made short films on this activity. Very early in his career he bought the Del Mar racecourse as well as a string of race-horses. He also owned the Pittsburgh Pirates baseball team in the States. So, his sporting activities are well established.

One might also add the category RELIGION: Under the early guidance of his mother (a true matriarch and perhaps the only person in the world who always called him Harry and never Bing) he was a devout catholic. He has been criticised - the only criticisms - over the standards he set for his children. He has given vast sums to charities, mainly religious. For example, claiming he hadn't the singing status to sing SILENT NIGHT he was nevertheless persuaded to - on condition that all royalties went to a catholic charity. As this record has turned out to be one of his multi-million sales records, the charity has, over the years, received a continuous and healthy sum.

As for radio, Bing broadcast throughout his career and, in fact, he made gramophone records in every single year from 1926 to 1977 - the last just a few days before he died. His record sales can never now be truly computed for they have been issued in so many countries on so many labels. Certainly his sales will never be matched. He was awarded gold discs and platinum discs and named Father of the Recording Industry.

THESE ARE JUST SOME OF THE REASONS WHY WE REVERE AND REMEMBER BING CROSBY.

Our members - from all over the world - spend a lot of time still researching Bing's incredible career, especially in gramophone records, broadcasting and films. Over the years we have been responsible for some notable publications such as THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY, a comprehensive book of all his 2,331 commercial recordings. Now many of his radio shows - he was the star of the prestigious KRAFT MUSIC HALL radio show for ten years -

have been discovered and issued on albums. Books on his scores of films have been published and hailed as the definitive publications. Other members merely collect Crosby records, often spending more than 20 years or more searching for an elusive 78rpm disc - that in these days of the Compact Discs on which, incidentally, Bing is already well represented.

Your letter will be published in the March issue of our quarterly magazine BING and I am sure our members will rally to your cause. It should be borne in mind however, that some of our members - those who remember Bing from 1931-32 are no longer young! In fact, they are old. Even so, there will be enough to render you all assistance.

LESLIE GAYLOR, 114 Medina Avenue, Isle of Wight, PO30 1HG is perhaps our most prominent member, being known worldwide for his Crosby interests. Unusually, he struck up a personal friendship with Bing. Like many others, Leslie has a CROSBY ROOM in his home devoted to records, books, pictures and all kinds of Bing memorabilia - well worth filming. People have come from all over the world to view this room.

Perhaps the sheer enormity of Bing's career deters some producers. I must confess that tho' younger people have the discernment to appreciate Bing's monumental qualities for those who, as stated, remember Bing from the start, trying to describe his impact on the world at that time is like trying to describe the London blitz, a parachute jump, or being torpedoed at sea! You really had to experience it to understand.

No doubt you will be hearing from our members in due course. Anything else we can do, just let us know.

A final word: all our members and 'officials' are purely honorary. We have no professionals.

Warmest regards,

3rd March 1989

REG BRISTO.
(Hon. Sec/Editor)

This puts all members completely in the picture. Any feeling they can contribute materially in the way of collections, opinions/interviews, filming of home Crosby Rooms &c. in fact, can be of assistance in any way towards a feal tribute to Bing are cordially invited to get in touch as soon as possible with the writer of the letter at the address given. Let's not give anyone the chance to be sarcastic about "the Crosby lobby" !

We have supplied Leslie Gaylor's address as he is our publicist and also not reticent about publicity. We could easily have supplied many other names and addresses but have refrained asrtheir feelings cannot be gauged at this stage and there isn't time to ascertain them. So - weigh in if you will !

LESLIE GAYLOR WRITES

CHRISTMAS has come and gone, as is its wont, and is now receding into the past but for a good many years now it has been customary for me to thank so many members for their kindness in sending me Christmas greetings via their delightful cards both from home and abroad. Very ingenious, too, are some I might add. I feel sure that it is readily accepted that I cannot possibly reciprocate to everybody. But once again, my grateful thanks to all concerned for the many kinds comments relating to my efforts on behalf of Bing.

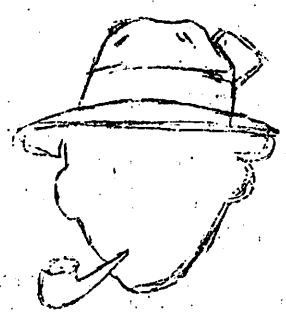
To start off my write-up for this issue I would like to present an opposing view to that of the Editor regarding the NEW TRICKS album as released by Memoir Records and concerning the fact that the sales haven't been successful.

First and foremost the Editor states that MEMOIR'S distribution was abysmal of this album. Not so, and not by a long shot. That the Editor saw the album in only one shop over a wide area is nothing at all to do with any distribution by MEMOIR RECORDS and I feel I really must come to their defence.

As I see it, dealers are advised by the record companies as to what are the latest releases available from the various distributors. It is then up to the dealers to order the records for stocking on their shelves. MEMOIR RECORDS nor anyone else can force their products on to the shops.

(Editor: Fair enough - let's deal with this first before letting Leslie get too far. Its fair also to say that in a subsequent communication Les agreed that distribution WAS poor but explained that PRT are the distributors and they require retailers to make a minumum order of £50 or sometimes £60. This retailers are reluctant to do - though it is true, this financial requirement extends across the board and not to one album. However, the net result was that distribution was poor so someone needs to alter their trading conditions whether it be Memoir or PRT. No good complaining about poor sales, as Memoir has, if customers don't even see the product!

Regrettably, Leslie has ignored the other points we made: NEW TRICKS was first issued on Brunswick probably 30 years ago and Les made the point that in that time there would be new potential customers. BUT, NEW TRICKS was reissued just a few years ago on MFP - a budget label to boot! If MEMOIR wanted to reissue a Crosby album for profit - reasonable enough - we say they were ill-advised on NEW TRICKS, simply because of the Music for Pleasure much more economic release. In these days of Compact Discs getting cheaper all the time, £6.49 was too expensive by Memoir for a reissue of this type.



But if they DID want a Crosby reissue, DRIFTING & DREAMING, IN A LITTLE SPANISH TOWN, TWILIGHT ON THE TRAIL, HOME ON THE RANGE for example, would have been better propositions for they have NEVER as yet been reissued.

And in letters there is abundant evidence, and has been for years, that these are precisely the albums most wanted. It is particularly true about TWILIGHT ON THE TRAIL. These are certainly the kind of records the private licensees want to reissue, not material that has already been released, in excellent quality, on a budget laBEL.

> We are not prepared to hail with joy ANY album of Bing that is issued simply because it IS Crosby. We have been told many times of such an album entitled DANCING IN THE DARK. All correspondents are agreed that the quality is poor. In other words, plenty of Tom, Dick's, and Harry's are hoping to cash in when they believe Crosby collectors will buy ANYTHING. It is not suggested that MEMOIR'S album was poor for indeed, the quality is excellent. But all albums made from tape are much better than those derived from 78rpm masters. And playing the MEMOIR and the MFP side by side there is very little difference, if any.
>
> Some may be puzzled at our reference to the MFP album for it wasn't entitled NEW TRICKS! They deleted the track, ON THE ALAMO, and included instead Bing's theme song and thus called the album WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT MEETS THE GOLD OF THE DAY (No.MFP 50249)
>
> BUT WHATEVER "MEMOIR" OR ANY OTHER COMPANY ISSUES IN THE FUTURE, THEY ARE OBVIOUSLY WASTING THEIR TIME IF THEY DO NOT ENSURE THAT THEIR OFFERINGS REACH THE SHOPS.

And now we can return to LESLIE GAYLOR: though you will observe the "distribution" problem comes into things again! for Les says:

I found it most enjoyable that good coverage was given to Pickwick Records in the Christmas issue. Obviously this company can be of great assistance to us in the future, providing always that sales are good. But acting on Pickwick's Mr. Howard's reference to the three Christmas releases by his company, Phil Clarke and I made use of our Senior Citizen's Railcard and headed for London to see if we could locate these records SINCE IN OUR OWN AREAS we drew a blank.

> MUCH TO OUR DISAPPOINTMENT WE COULD FIND NOTHING OF THE CHRISTMAS RELEASES IN ANY OF THE BIG LONDON SHOPS SUCH AS VIRGIN, TOWER AND HMV SHOPS. ON QUESTIONING THE STAFF I LEARNED THEY HAD NOT EVEN ORDERED THEM!

Still with Pickwick, I happened to receive from Mr. Howard a cassette of the tracks scheduled for BING SINGS MORE GREAT SONGS (see TRACK EVENTS) On playing the cassette, however, I noticed at once that six of the songs were running slow - and to quite some degree.

Discussing this subsequently with Mr. Howard he remarked that he thought some songs sounded a little odd and thanked me for pointing this out to him. It proved that a cassette-copying machine was at fault!

You read in the previous issue also about the faulty tape of THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME supplied to them by American MCA and that while they were "looking for a better tape" could I help?

"MCA in America can't let us have a replacement for some while, and MCA in London are going to see if they could find a tape," Mr. Howard told me. On hearing this I automatically knew he would have no luck with the latter since in January last year former Decca producer - and good friend of Crosbyana - Geoff. Milne told me that all the metal parts and tapes that had gone to produce the Bing records for the Brunswick-MCA labels for so many years had been thrown out - for scrap! "Criminal" was how Geoff described this.

> So that production schedules would not be disrupted, I turned up an unplayed Japanese MCA album of Bing singing GEORGE GERSHWIN SONGS and put THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME onto a reel-to-reel tape and sent it to the relevant department, Tape One Recording Studios in Windmill St., Tottenham Court Rd., London where it received the digital re-mastering treatment. And this, of course, will be the track you hear when you get your Pickwick cassette, LP., or Compact Disc !

Pickwick were quite enraptured with this, and also with the sleeve notes compiled by STAN WHITT (Rothwell, Kettering). They had asked me to write between 800-1000 words for the project but a quick phone call to Stan had him readily accepting my request to do these notes. As you will see, Stan knows his Bing and is most able with a typewriter! A happy combined operation, one might say, which should stand us in good stead with Pickwick Records, especially as their CHRISTMAS WITH BING project is already on the stocks, to coin a phrase! Proposed tracks for this (next Christmas!) are:

1. Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer.
2. The Bells of St. Mary's.
3. Angels we have heard on high
4. Away in a manger.
5. The Christmas song
6. Deck the Hall
7. Good King Wenceslas
8. I saw three ships.
9. Snow
10. Christmas is A'coming
11. Sleigh ride.
12. I heard the bells on Christmas Day
13. Have yourself a merry little Christmas
14. It came upon a midnight clear
15. O, little town of Bethlehem
16. The night before Christmas.

Indeed, our help is already being enlisted for some of the tapes received are once more in poor quality! However, there's plenty of time to put things right. (Editor: Les - if ANYTHING can be done I would love to have what I consider Bing's finest Christmas song - O HOLY NIGHT included please!)

With Phil Clarke, my travelling companion, I attended the Christmas meeting of the London branch of the Sinatra Music Society. Here Ken Barnes introduced me to a very nice man, one LEE SIMMONDS, from RCA Records. Ken, in fact, introduced me by saying I could probably tell Lee what colour shirt Bing was wearing on such and such a date!

Ken then brought up the matter of the four songs Bing recorded on January 28, 1930, for RCA that many members would like to get for they were unaware of them until Alan Dell played ALOHA MEANS I LOVE YOU on his 'Sounds Easy' programme recently.

And, it turned out, Mr. Simmonds was quite unaware of them, too. "We've been scraping the bottom of the barrel looking for Crosby material," he told me so I gave him a full briefing on the songs right away! It was revealed that RCA had completed tapes for a CD release of the Bing-Bob Scobey tracks and earlier material. Ken Barnes suggested the four songs could be added to the planned FANCY MEETING YOU HERE Compact Disc.

I agreed to put the four songs onto a cassette for Lee Simmonds, together with a photo-copy of the sleeve notes apertaining to them. They came from yet another Japanese release entitled THE YOUNG BING CROSBY. Lee Simmonds final words to me were: "I'll put them out." Now we can only wait and see.

The track, ALOHA MEANS I LOVE YOU that Alan Dell aired came from an Australian EP 45rpm disc I had given him for use on SOUNDS EASY. Reaction has been most exciting and I certainly share the view that Bing was in spprb voice on these tracks. In fact, its a great pity he didn't do more recording in the 1960s when recording techniques were so improved. Bing's lackadaisical approach handed everything on a plate to the other singers around.

Some background to the four songs may be of interest. A single of two of the songs, namely THE MUSIC OF HOME and ITS A GOOD DAY were released in the USA on February 9, 1960. The first-named was from a Broadway show called 'Greenwillow" which alas, collapsed after only a five-weeks' run. No further presssings of this single were, therefore, made. RCA next informed the Crosby office that also on February 9, 1960 they were putting out another 45rpm single of ALOHA MEANS I LOVE YOU and THE NEW ASHMOLEAN MARCHING SOCIETY STUDENTS' CONSERVATORY BAND (some title, it might be claimed!)

For some reason not known, this issue never materialised.

The scene now changes to Australia; in 1967 I heard from the late Keith Hyde, a prominent Aussie collector, that some collectors had secured a meeting with a new RCA manager who was taking over and prevailed upon him to make a limited pressing - 1500 if I remember rightly - of the four songs.

Many of these copies found their way here and it was then 'spread around' on tape as so often happens. I obtained a copy of the record for Bing himself. Next time he was here I went up to London to give it to him. Viewing it with some enthusiasm he said: "Do you know, Leslie, I just don't have these songs myself!"

> Bing went on to say that he was going to Rome and Kenya from London and was concerned he might lose or damage the record. So, "Will you send it to the office, Leslie, to await my arrival home?"

Naturally I was happy to oblige and in due course I had a letter from Bing thanking me and added: "I played the songs over and you are quite right - they are quite good."

Like many others, I've been in the fortunate position to have gone overboard for the Compact Disc because of losing clicks, pops and other unwanted noises - although in some cases these can be evident on CDs. But I haven't abandoned the albums of the same releases which coming from the very same masters sound the same to me on compact discs as they do on cassettes, as well as they do on LPs. Perhaps some members may well be justified in calling me "cloth-eared." ! In a recent programme Alan Dell was talking about the possible demise of the LP record. Commenting on the lines that it may be a little sad if the albums disappeared Alan remarked "There is something warm about them" with which I must agree.

The next time I find myself in a recording studio I will ask the sound experts what "digital recording" really is. The numerous visitors here I find general agreement that they had heard Bing singing the best they had

ever heard him on my equipment. Quite a number have written or phoned to say they went home and sold off their old equipment and purchased new units after hearing Bing on mine. So, I suppose I must be listening to digital sounds most favourably!

Finally, noting what has been said in BING concerning the noted American pianist Paul Smith and his handling of the arrangements for the album that Bing paid for, A SOUTHERN MEMOIR and BINGO VIEJO, may I join in? Regarding the recording of GEORGIA ON MY MIND I recall speaking to Ken Barnes on two occasions about this track before it was ever released, the reason being that Bing himself disliked the "pop" sounding arrangement and told Ken that he would get Paul Smith to write another arrangement. But Bing seemingly lost the initiative to have the new arrangement written. But other tracks on the two albums have given me great pleasure - CAROLINA IN THE MORNING, SLEEPY TIME DOWN SOUTH, STARS FELL ON ALABAMA, WHERE THE MORNING GLORIES GROW, THE BREEZE AND I, FRENESI (a real beauty!) and LA BORRACHITA, the last-named as remixed on the ANAHUAC label is a real gem, with wonderful guitar playing.

> It was Bing who sought out Paul Smith because of his noted standing as a pianist in America. Geoff Milne of British Decca conveyed to me at the time of the release of A SOUTHERN MEMOIR that they could have got more out of the album had it been better recorded - Geoff wrote of various "noises". I note member Ted Towler never acquired the aforementioned album - but as Alan Dell announced on Radio 2 - the Crosby 'faithful' collected everything!

Editor: Leslie as interesting and informative as ever - with a fair exchange of views thrown in for good measure! I don't agree with "collecting everything". One gets taken for plenty of rides in that belief.... like Leslie, however, I am completely won over by the Compact Disc and Leslie answered a question I'm often asked: Will I stop playing my LPs and other records if I get a CD player? Certainly not. One can revel in the crystal clear sound of the CD and appreciate the new qualities given the voice AND the accompaniment but its just a question of adaptation: good quality LPs can always be listened to and enjoyed.

> But if A SOUTHERN MEMOIR is issued on Compact Disc I shall think long and hard before I purchase it. I accept Paul Smith is a modern pianist of great technique but for me he made a real hash of scoring for Mr. Crosby. Most mail agrees with that unhappy sentiment. And not for the first time we lament the lack of Jack Kapp's guiding hand....he would blanch if he could hear SOUTHERN MEMOIR and, for that matter, a number of other albums! Dare we mention - again - BING SINGS WHILE BERGMAN SWINGS??!

And no doubt it would be excessively naughty of us to ask, in view of Leslie's experience with the Christmas Pickwicks (same as ours) if distribution of Pickwicks is on a par with Memoir's ?

LISTEN TO "GEORGIA ON MY MIND" on the new CD from Pickwick - and then listen to Bing sing Paul Smith's version. If you can....

However, we must make it clear: there is room for all shades of opinion.

HAS THE WORLD GONE TOTALLY CRACKERS?

AT 6pm tonight, 150 movie fans will settle down in a cinema in Chicago with food, drink, pillows and bedding rolls and watch BING CROSBY'S 1942 epic HOLIDAY INN, which includes the song WHITE CHRISTMAS.... non-stop for the next 24 hours.

"We hope to get in 14 or 15 showings, and as the song is sung three times in the picture, we'll hear it about 45 times," says James Leah, chairman of the local Crosby Appreciation Society.

"So far as we're concerned, its a wonderful way to spend Christmas. Luckily, the projectionists are Crosby fans too."

The movie will be shown on TV in at least 20 countries over Christmas, but its not the most-shown Christmas film. That honour goes to THE WIZARD OF OZ. Its been shown eight times at Christmas on British TV alone.

Volunteer firemen will be on duty in the Chicago cinema - when a similar marathon was attempted in Philadelphia in 1984, the film projector caught fire!

THE above quite startling story appeared in many local papers up and down the country on Christmas Eve last. (This one came from Ron Newton in Shropshire) It was accompanied by a picture of Bing from HOLIDAY INN, with the caption beneath: COULD YOU WATCH BING CROSBY IN "HOLIDAY INN" 15 TIMES IN A ROW? We have to confess, avid as we are for Bing, we don't think we could! We think, also, the headline is justified - though it would be infinitely more pertinent if the question was addressed apropos the hordes of people who go out of their minds in ecstasy at the uncouth, unmusical, pop groups that abound.

More pertinently to us: we've been in operation for a long, long time and know most of the Crosby societies throughout the world yet we've never had an inkling of this obviously rabid group in Chicago! Can any of our Stateside members enlighten us further please?

Although Bing was, of course, well to the fore on radio here over the Yuletide season it was rather sad that he was conspicuous by his absence on our normal TV screens. By normal we mean either BBC or ITV for there is a channel of the cable variety called SUPER which did show WHITE CHRISTMAS consistently all through the Christmas holidays. We have to confess we gave up after seeing it three times. We hope that doesn't qualify us for expulsion from the higher echelons of Crosbyana. Especially as we might add we infinitely prefer HOLIDAY INN. That story of the "old man" - the General - and his 'holiday' inn, with the brigade rallying around in their ill-fitting uniforms, and the snow coming down on cue, is rather cloying, is it not ? At least, it is after 3 consecutive viewings !

BING

TRACK EVENTS

WHAT'S NEW!

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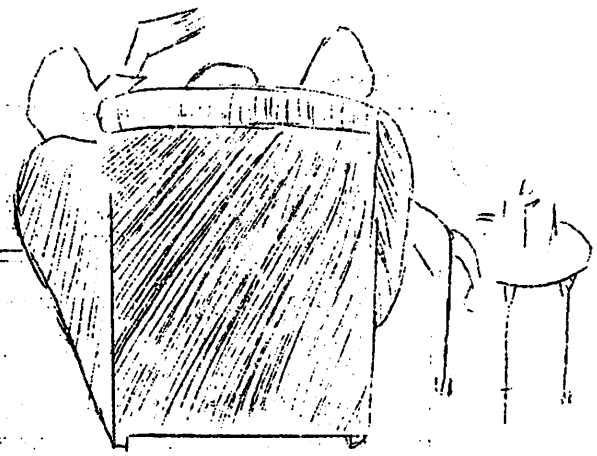


Record distribution is passing from the abysmal to the ludicrous - in fact, the lunatic! Just one of the Pickwick Christmas issues - CHRISTMAS WITH THE ANDREWS SISTERS (containing 5 with Bing), the LP not the Compact Disc, has just arrived - first week of March - in just one local shop ! Well, perhaps it will still be there for next Christmas....

The cheerless news is that the CBS updated reissue THE CROONER (four LPs, 3 cassettes, or three Compact Discs) is not going to be issued here. Asked about it, CBS UK not only said they had no plans to issue it - they said blankly they had never heard of it !

However, to more positive business and material that has been issued on time - we got the February release of the new Pickwick in the first week of March! So, it can be done....

BING CROSBY SINGS MORE GREAT SONGS. PICKWICK	CD PWK 088 Price £3.99p LP SHM 3259 Price £2.99; Cassette HSC 3259 Price £2.99p

1. There's no business like show business: with the Andrews Sisters, Dick Haymes and Vic Schoen & Orchestra.
2. Secret Love. (John Scott Trotter & his Orchestra)
3. Stranger in Paradise: " " " "
4. Ac-cent-tchu-ate the positive (with Andrews Sisters and Vic Schoen & Orch.)
5. I'll be seeing you. (John Scott Trotter & his Orch)
6. I love Paris. " " " " " "
7. People will say we're in love (with Trudy Erwin & Sportsmens' Glee Club)
8. They can't take that away from me (John Scott Trotter & his Orch)
9. You must have been a beautiful baby (Bob Crosby & his Orchestra)
10. A nightingale sang in Berkeley Square (John Scott Trotter & his Orch)
11. You made me love you (with Merry Macs and Victor Young & his Orch)
12. Red sails in the sunset (Victor Young and his Orch)
13. Wrap your troubles in dreams (John Scott Trotter and his Orch)
14. Georgia on my mind (Buddy Cole Trio)
15. Autumn leaves (Axel Stordahl and his Orch)

Cont...

UNFORGETTABLE

The word is often used and usually most sincerely meant, especially in connection with Bing Crosby.

Occasionally, however, we get a letter from which, though the writer plays it down, we can feel the stark drama behind the events described. Like this.....

"Christine, my daughter, loves Bing and is building up her own collection. To her, to all of us, he's part of the family and his signed photograph has pride of place in our front-room...

I shall never forget the day the tickets came for the Palladium show - the last one as it happened. The same morning I was told I had breast-cancer. The doctor asked my husband if I had a holiday planned. No, said Ron, but she IS going to see Bing Crosby in July.."

"Great!" said the doctor. "We'll get her fit enough to cheer her head off!"

And after the operation every time he came round the ward he would say: "We'll be in great shape to cheer ol' Bing, won't we!"

And I was. I never have, and never shall, forget that night. Those tickets gave me the extra bit of fight I needed so desperately at that time. Dear old Bing gave me the will and it was so wonderful to see him walk out onto that stage. He was great...I clapped until my hands were numb.

Surely readers will agree with our introduction above. The writer - Mrs. Eileen Knight, 57 Burlington Road, West Bromwich, West Midlands, B70 6LE.

We learn there are annual checks but, happily, no recurrence of the dreaded scourge. We pray there never is.

We all had excellent advance notice of this issue, thanks to the splendid co-operation our two stalwarts, LES GAYLOR and STAN WHITE afforded Pickwick in its preparation. And a fine selection it turns out to be. We have given merely the titles and accompaniments but the sleeve (and the CD inlay) give very full particulars including recording dates, compoers &c.

The CD inlay is a reduced version of the LP sleeve; colourful and nicely designed by one David Gibson in a mixture of mid-brown, beige and with BING CROSBY very prominent plus two attractive pictures. A nice package indeed.

> Surprisingly, perhaps, Stan White's notes are included in full in the CD as well as the LP. Stan tells the Crosby story quite succinctly in comparatively brief terms, adding enormously to the whole thing. It was Leslie, you recall, who provided the full recording data; and Les is a little worried that in the case of YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU the description is VICTOR YOUNG AND HIS ORCHESTRA when really it was instrumental accompaniment directed by V. Young. A minor point hardly worth the mention! Another point of particular interest is that the CD inlay carries mention of the ICC and BING magazine.

This is a splendid follow-up to the first issue, BING CROSBY SINGS THE GREAT SONGS which came as such a surprise - and, we learn with some delight, has to date sold more than 50,000 copies. In these times this can be considered a very satisfactory figure indeed. We certainly hope the new issue emulates, or exceeds, that excellent sale, especiallyas it has now been revealed that today's "gold" records are earned so easily among the "pop" fraternity.

The selection is wide-ranging, both as regards type of song and recording dates. With seven recorded in the 40s that decade does predominate, but there are three of the 30s - the earliest being the well-loved RED SAILS IN THE SUNSET from 12th November, 1935 - while five come from the 50s, the "latest" of course being the exceedingly tuneful GEORGIA ON MY MIND with the Buddy Cole Trio recorded on 14th March, 1957. Thus we are able to hear the Crosby voice over 22 years, viz. 1935 to 1957.

There are plenty of evocative thoughts, too, about the tracks. The opening, rumbustious NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS, a true tour-de-force with The Andrews Sisters, Dick Haymes and the lively Vic Schoen Orchestra. Dick Haymes! There's a name we don't recall ever having mentioned in BING before even when referring to some of Bing's better-known contemporaries. As most know, Dick had a fine, nicely-toned, masculine voice. Not a Crosby copier as such but in the same mould, shall it be said? His other claim to fame, of course, was that he was, at once time, married to glamorous Rita Hayworth. Members may be surprised to know - if wondering what happened to Dick Yames - that in the 60s he was living on the banks of the Thames near Windsor. He made one or two TV appearances but it was sad to see that not only had his voice badly deteriorated but he had joined the "long-haired" tee-shirt brigade. He has since passed away.

Then there is I'LL BE SEEING YOU - the first song Bing sang live on a British radio programme in late 1944, his first-ever visit. How we remember the fantastic excitement of that evening! Franklin Engelmann was the announcer - and was he excited, too! "I'm glad he's here..you're glad here's here..the band's glad he's here - AND HE IS HERE ? BING CROSBY! Fir his first number Bing is going to sing something he hopes will soon be coming true for so many of you.... I'LL BE SEEING YOU."

Bing had been a national - an INTERNATIONAL - favourite for at least a dozen years, of course, by 1944. After a dozen years of hearing his records on Family Favourites, Forces Favourites, Two-Way Favourites, BING SINGS - 15 Minutes with Bing and sundry other features, he was HERE! It had taken the Second World War plus hundreds of thousands of GI's to bring him here - but that didn't matter. As Franklin said: HE IS HERE! It was quite memorable, unbelievably so. Ever since 1932 there were regular stories/rumours that Bing was coming to Britain...positively....

Next we might mention PEOPLE WILL SAY WE'RE IN LOVE, one of the memorable songs from the very successful show OKLAHOMA by Rodgers & Hammerstein. This is unusual for at least two factors: firstly, 1943 was a sparse year for Crosby recordings, or those by anyone else, for a musicians' recording strike took place for the larger part of that year. And this, like OH! WHAT A BEAUTIFUL MORNING (also with Trudy Erwin), IF YOU PLEASE and SUNDAY, MONDAY OR ALWAYS, were recorded with vocal accompaniment only, no instruments!

> Another point of interest is that TRUDY ERWIN seems to have been a favourite with Bing for she sang with him most prolifically on the Kraft Music Hall. Yet, she appeared on only three commercial recordings with Mr. C, the third being in 1946 - I'LL SEE YOU IN CUBA.

It may be an interesting "quiz" question: Can you spot anything unusual about PEOPLE WILL SAY WE'RE IN LOVE? I tried it on 3 non-Crosby addicts (tho' they like him!) and not one spotted the lack of an orchestra.

> Finally, we've often wondered if Trudy was any relation to Stuart Erwin who appeared with Bing in THE BIG BROADCAST OF 1932? Stuart was one of that small army of splendid character actors who so often made a massive contribution to Hollywood films but never rated as "stars". People like J. Carroll Naish, Nat Pendelton, Allen Jenkins, Edward Everett Horton, Eric Blore, Mischa Auer, and many, many more.

THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME is, of course, the replacement track LES GAYLOR supplied - nothing wrong with the transfer but I do feel this wasn't one of Bing's better performances. However, with I LOVE PARIS, A NIGHTINGALE SANG IN BERKELEY SQUARE, RED SAILS IN THE SUNSET, these are all little-issued on LP tracks and therefore very desirable - the last two-named by famed British composers, Jimmy Kennedy and Eric Maschwitz. In fact, Bing was always happy to record songs by British writers - especially perhaps those of Ray Noble, viz., THE VERY THOUGHT OF YOU, TOUCH OF YOUR LIPS, GOODNIGHT SWEETHEART, LOVE IS THE SWEETEST THING

Bing has fun with the MERRY MACS in YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU, offering musical rejoinders to them in the final chorus. Brother Bob is on the scene, too, with YOU MUST HAVE BEEN A BEAUTIFUL BABY from October 1938.

LES GAYLOR, the ICC. and Frank Murphy's photo-club are all mentioned on the CD inlay and most certainly is STAN WHITE for his comprehensive notes. We looked at the LP sleeve but failed to notice the first two-named on that, or on the cassette. Lack of space on the latter obviously.

So, a splendid package from Pickwick who seem to be our only "friends" just at the moment as far as LPs go....

Next we come to another Compact Disc:

(Cont...

THE BEST OF BING CROSBY

"INCLUDES 'WHITE CHRISTMAS 'PENNIES FROM HEAVEN'
**********AMONGST 20 CROSBY CLASSICS" ********

Compact Disc:
DMCL 1607
Price: £7.99p

Here they are - all the hardy perennials of Crosbyana. But this time we're not grumbling for this is the LP* we have long been familiar with translated to the latest format of CD. And a mighty fine sound it all makes. And of course, it is essential that these tracks appear on CD.

1. Where the blue of the night (Meets the gold of the day)
2. Swinging on a star.
3. You are my sunshine
4. Its been a long, long time
5. MacNamara's Band
6. Sweet Leilani
7. I'm an old cowhand (from the Rio Grand)
8. Pennies from Heaven
9. Don't fence me in
10. White Christmas
11. Mexicali Rose
12. The Whiffenpoof Song
13. I can't begin to tell you
14. Play a simple melody
15. Dear hearts and gentle people
16. Galway Bay
17. In the cool, cool, cool of the evening
18. Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral. (That's an Irish Lullaby)
19. Sam's song (The happy tune)
20. Now is the hour. (Maori farewell song)

Many of these tracks have already appeared on CD and there is no doubt that duplications of tracks on CD are going to be as much of a plague as they were on LP, alas. Which puts Pickwick, at least, in a meritorious position for they certainly have steered clear of "perennials".

> There is one curio; Bing's theme song, Track No 1 is the 1931 recording whereas on the LP the 1945 track was used. And this is not the first time that these two recordings have been transposed. On the MFP BLUE OF THE NIGHT we've mentioned several times as a re-named NEW TRICKS album, there were two issues of that LP - some of the 1931 track and some of the 1945! One wonders how this comes about? Id it a question of which master is pulled from the shelf? Or does it depend on the compiler's personal preference?
>
> *NB: The LP we refer to of BEST OF BING CROSBY is, of course, MCF 2540.

My goodness! Our LPs are rapidly being made redundant!

Most members, especially those in towns, will be aware that some remarkable cassette offers have been made since Christmas! These appear mainly in supermarkets, chain stores, newsagents (like Menzies). Unfortunately they are tossed into bins or baskets, making it extremely tedious to look through them. One wonders why this is done. But several are of Crosby material, usually of albums with which we are already familiar, e.g. The Unforgettable, The Entertainers, and others. But one sent to us by BERT MINISTER of Morecame we found most intriguing. It was professionally produced and entitled THE LEGENDARY BING CROSBY, the jacket bearing a fine picture of Bing. According to the jacket it was issued by NOSTALGIA, 35 Park Road, Prestwich, Manchester, M25 8ES (Phone 061-721-4076.

Some members may be aware of this project; we don't know whether or not this is an enterprising individual or a pukka concern. At any rate, whoever is responsible is well acquainted with Bing, for not only are the titles given, but accurate accompaniments, recording dates and composers are included also. And the title "legendary" is well-merited for these are very, very, early tracks. Well covered, of course, by all sorts of other issues, especially The Chronological series. We merely give the titles and not all the other dat for it is readily available to our members. The price Bert Ministsr saw was £3.95. There are 18 tracks - and the jacket is furth enhanced with a nice picture of Bing.

1. Mississippi mud/I left my sugar standing in the rain.
2. Sweet L'il/Ain't she sweet.
3. Make believe.
4. High water
5. You took advantage of me
6. Get out and get under the moon
7. I'll get by
8. Susianna.
1. If I had you
2. The spehll of the blues
3. Let's do it.
4. My Angeline
5. My kinda love
6. Till we meet
7. Little pal
8. S'posin
9. I kiss your hand, madame.
10. Baby, oh where can you be?

Orchestras are Sam Lanin's Famous Players; Ipana Troubadours; Paul Whiteman's; Dorsey Bros.

Full details of a new clutch of no less than five albums by Spokane were included in the previous issue of BING, viz.,

Spokane 28: Bing in the 30s.
" 29: " " " "
" 30: Der Bingle, Vol. 4
Spokane 31: Bing & Dinah (Shore)
" 32: Der Bingle Vol 5

Some specialist shops import these - notably The Record Centre in Birmingham; but our Mrs. Renee Chester, so often taking the initiative in things such as this also imported a few sets. They were snapped up so quickly that Renee has been encouraged to order a further 12 sets - and these, we understand, are all that can now be obtained. Apply to Renee at:

53 Park Crescent,
Eastwood,
Nottingham
NG16 3DS

Cost of the set of five is £28.32, a more than fair price considering the expense and trouble involved in getting them from the States. These are not, of course, generally available here.

IF LEE SIMMONDS OF RCA RECORDS didn't know about ALOHA MEANS I LOVE YOU and the other three records, LES GAYLOR brief him on, can it be that he is unaware that RCA actually hold one of the finest Crosby epics ever - namely,

HOW THE WEST WAS WON !

What a CD that would make. No need to scrape the barrel, its brimming over with some of the finest Bing ever....

"THE CROONER"

BING CROSBY: THE COLUMBIA YEARS 1928-1934

There appear, strangely enough, to be no catalogue numbers; we are dealing here with the 3 COMPACT DISCS, but the collection is also available (In America) on 4 Long-Playing records, and 3 AUDIO CASSETTES

So we come to the set about which plenty has been said recently; we come to it rather reluctantly not because it isn't a splendid, indeed wonderful, slice of grass-roots Bing but because we've already had to say that CBS in Britain have been quite uncomprising in their ignorance of the set and any plans to issue it here; so its possible further information on it is an aggravation. Yet, we know members in the majority like to know about these issues, irrespedtive of their ability to obtain them.

THE BEST SOLUTION IS TO GET AN AMERICAN FRIEND VIA "BING".

We've also strongly considered a concerted attack on CBS here in the way of shoals of letters by members asking if the set is to be issued here - and if not, WHY NOT? Unfortunately, we've searched in vain for a positive address for CBS in Britain! Surprising but true. One reference, GRAMOPHONE, gives only a distributor here for CBS, viz. Rabans Lane, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP19 3BX. Yet another GRAMOPHONE publication gives COUNTERPOINT DISTRIBUTION, Wharf Rd., Stratford, London E15 2SU so we're somewhat floundering in the dark as to whom the letters should be addressed!

The titles in the set, expanded since the original issue of A BING CROSBY COLLECTION, Vols 1, 2 and 3 on the CBS Embassy label smme years ago are as follows. Those underlined appeared on the earlier non-CD set; there are no less than 65 tracks spread over fhe CDs, LPS, or cassettes:

1. Rose of Mandalay
2. (Anyone can see with half an eye) I'm crazy over you.
3. My kinda love.
4. My Angeline
5. Little pal.
6. Oh Miss Hannah
7. Orange blossom time
8. Waiting at the end of the road
9. Southern Medley
10. I'm sorry, dear.
11. Can't we talk it over?
12. I found you.
13. Snuggled on your shoulder
14. Starlight (Help me find the one I love)
15. Love you funny thing
16. Shine
17. Face the Music Medley: Soft lights and sweet music/On a roof in Manhattan.
18. Shadows on the window
19. Paradise
20. You're still in my heart
21. Lawd, you made the night too long
22. Waltzing in a dream
23. Happy go lucky you and broken-hearted me
24. Lazy day.
25. Let's try again.
26. With summer coming on (I'm still without a sweetheart)
27. Love me tonight
28. Some of these days
29. Linger a little longer in the twilight.
30. We're a couple of soldiers
31. Brother, can you spare a dime?
32. Sweet Sue.
33. Let's put out the lights and go to sleep
34. I'll follow you
35. Someday we'll meet again
36. On a street of dreams (sic) Should be On The Street of Dreams.
37. Its within your power
38. I'm playing with fire.
39. Try a little tenderness

40. You're getting to be a habit with me.
41. Young and healthy
42. You're beautiful tonight, mydear
43. I've got the world on a string
44. My honey's lovin' arms
45. What do I care, its home!
46. You've got me crying again
47. Someone stole Gabriel's horn.
48. Stay on the right side of the road.
49. Here is my heart
50. Learn to croon.
51. My love
52. I've got to pass your house,to get to my house
53. Blue Prelude
54. I would if I could, but I can't.
55. Shadow waltz
56. I've got to sing a torch song
57. There's a cabin in the pines.
58. The last round-up
59. Home on the range
60. Let's spend at evening at home.
61. May I?
62. Little Dutch mill
63. Shadows of love.
64. Ridin' around in the rain.
65. Give me a heart to sing to.

Thus it can be seen that there are 21 tracks additional to the original issue of 3 LPs. That is rather immaterial, really, for the remastering of the tracks digitally has enhanced them beyond belief. This is so with the CDs and it is fairly certain the LPs and cassettes are that much better. This is all the more miraculous when it is considered that some of these tracks are around 60 years old now; 78s are by no means the best vehicle for transfer to CD yet they get a whole set of new dimensions notwithstanding. An incredible listening delight.

The man responsible for this momentous, even monumental, issue is MICHAEL BROOKS, who, we learned from the previous issue, is English but clearly has been in the States for many years. He grew up in south-west London where he learned about Bing via the Road movies in local cinemas. He obviously has a wide knowledge of Bing and to complement his splendid package of recordings he produced a fine, glossy brochure of 12 pages measuring 11½ ins. square. This accompanies the CDs and the LPs but we imagine it cannot accompany the cassettes.

> It contains not only some great photographs of Bing (some of which we've not seen before and that is saying something!) but his own very individual notes on all the individual tracks. Pungent, even caustic in places, they invite divergence but they never, never, dispbay any snide or denigratory remarks about his subject.

And he produced some rare phrases. We particularly like the way he spoke of BROTHER, CAN YOU SPARE A DIME:

> "Rudy Vallee always claimed that he introduced the song, but that's an irrelevance. High light, whinnying tenor was quite unsuited to the song....CROSBY'S BITTER MASCULINE ROAR, set against a march tempo, captures the real mood of a national betrayed."

Which makes it all the more puzzling that Brooks named his opus THE CROONER! A description that, as readers now know, we heartily detest - and reject.Its impossible to listen to the powerful interpretation of these songs and identify it with the slushy, thin, effeminate tones of "crooning".

part from his commentary on the tracks, Michael Brooks has some forthright views on Bing which, once again, are open to vastly varying views. For instance, he says "But then, Bing was never the conventional good-guy in real life, and anyone who still believes otherwise had better go see Peter Pan and start clapping hands at the appropriate moments...! Hmmmm.....

Then Michael had the distressing experience of being on the receiving end of what he called the Crosby fish-eye. He is not at all reticent either about relating this unfortunate happening. He writes:

> "My own personal involvement with the great man was miniscule. I met him for the first and only time about a year before he died, and I was as nervous and excited as a kid chosen to present a trophy to a sports superstar. He was staying in New York just across from the Metropolitan Museum, and, as I waited for him in the lobby of his apartment building, I saw him come through the door. He was smaller than I expectedand the face, though deeply lined, was instantly recognizable, right down to those icy-blue eyes. And typically Crosby, he was carrying a bundle of dry cleaning under his arm when the place had a bevy of flunkies to execute such menial tasks.
>
> IT WAS AWFUL! I GOT THE FISH-EYE TREATMENT IN SPADES. FIRST OF ALL HE DENIED KNOWING ABOUT THE APPOINTMENT ALTHOUGH IT HAD BEEN SET UP IN ADVANCE THROUGH HIS AGENT. THEN HE WAS UTTERLY INTRANSIGENT, BLOCKING EVERY ONE OF MY QUESTIONS SKILLFULLY WITH "NO, I DON'T REMEMBER SINGING THAT SONG AT ALL." "NO, THAT WAS ALL TOO LONG AGO", AND "NO, I DON'T RECALL SUCH A MUSICIAN" until my carefully prepared interview lay in ruins and I cursed the day I went into a record store and bought my first Crosby 78.
>
> It took me months to get over the experience and come to the conclusion that Bing Crosby was a man, very human and probably, when I saw him, very tired. But we elevate people of stature to the level of gods and while we fawn on them we demand total obedience, ordering them to smile and be gracious while we claw at them and bellow inanities in their ears."

This, in our view, makes Michael Brooks a not only magnanimous man, but also a very understanding one.

So, let's return to the music content though really little needs to be said to the true Crosby followers. As producer, Michael had a fine team of researchers, archivists, restoration engineers &c. And what a thrill to have such numbers as BLUE PRELUDE, SNUGGLED ON YOUR SHOULDER, BROTHER CAN YOU SPARE SPARE A DIME? and others on CD. LINGER A LITTLE LONGER IN THE TWILIGHT comes in for savage treatment from Mr. Brooks! Such a fsvourite of ours, too!

So, within two years we have two 3-CD sets, the other of course, being the 10th Anniversary Collection of 50s material doctored up. And in respect of this we might quote a letter from an obeiously old-stage: "You know, I've had the 10th Anniversary discs about 18 months now yet I don't think I've played all three ALL through yet. I was fortunate enough to get the CBS trio from the States. I sat down and played them through TWICE in toto...."

We are now in possession of the PRO ARTE CD "PENNIES FROM HEAVEN" details of which can be seen on page 22 of the last issue. The inlay is of special interest for it makes no bones at all about "archives", masters, vaults or takes but simply says they "found the best possible copies!

We wonder if Mrs. Kathryn is aware of what is going on literally all over the world !

The answer, of course, is that recordings made more than half-a-century ago are now copyright-expired and are open to all kinds of exploitation without the possibility of legal repercussions from the individual artists or their heirs. CBS's remarkable issue just dealt comes "from the collections of Howard Levine. Apart from that aspect, we feel the notes on the PENNIES FROM HEAVEN Inlay (this is another America-only issue alas) There must be a good deal of scepticism about the very existence of what is in the vaults, or the archives. However, this inlay carries notes by one DAVID LENNICK (Toronto 1988) as follows:

Regret uncorrected errors right at bottom of previous page: 4 lines up read " "obviously old-stager"

"The original recordings digitally restored in this Pro Arte/Fanfare Collectors' Series release were made more than half-a-century ago. Even allowing for the techniques in use at that time, the producers feel that the performers can now be heard to better advantage than ever before, thanks to present-day refinements in the reproduction of older recordings.

"In capturing the original greatness of legendary artists, no effort was spared to find the best possible original copies. Care was taken to ensure that the proper play-back speed was used (Gershwin's "Preludes", for example, were recorded at 76rpm). Careful examination of the grooves was made with proper stylii fitted to match the original. Original discs were carefully centered, to ensure the total absence of wow and flutter. American, Canadian and English pressings were compared, when available, to guarantee the least amount of surface noise. Equalization was used to ensure a wide-range, high fidelity sound, often not heard when these recordings were brand-new.

"Where it was deemed advisable, a small amount of reverberation was applied to compensate for the small studios often used in making records during the Depression. Extraneous noises such as surface glitches and clicks were removed. And finally, the recordings were left in their original and properly balanced MONOAURAL state. The result? A restoration of genius, digitally enhanced, in sound superior to anything thought possible when these performances were originally engraved for posterity.

Illuminating? It has long been apparent that, whether or not they knew it, those sound engineers way back in the late 20s (when electrical recording was first developed) and certainly in the 30s when Bing was so predominant, were putting frequencies into those 78rpm shellac records that were NOT audible on the playing equipment available. Long-playing records from taped 78s showed the way. And now the compact disc might be fully completing the process in letting us hear the sounds - at last - that were put there in the first place.

Despite admitting looking around for the "best copies" Pro-Arte still make the usual copyright claims THEMSELVES re unauthorised broadcasting, copying &c. Its a wonderful record - the record world !

WOOD FROM THE TREES SYNDROME

BUT FINALLY, "AN EVENING AT POPS" by (Rev). MICHAEL COLLINS.

(Michael is temporarily domiciled in Winter Haven, Florida, US - Editor).

****

One of the infuriating results of the bewildering range of choice offered by American cable television is that you never quite know where you stand. The weekly TV Guide (about the size of an average paperback book) is formidable enough, Heaven knows, but even that does not cover all the regional variations.

Not long ago, for example, viewers in this part of the world had a veritable Bing bonanza when they tuned into PBS, Tampa (this station doesn't carry advertisements and is the nearest we have to the BBC both in tone and in content), because in one evening they were offered REMEMBERING BING, hosted by Dorothy Lamour, and A TRIBUTE TO THE ORIGINAL CROONER, BING CROSBY by the Boston Pops Orchestra. Yet only the second of these programmes, for some reason, was broadcast by the neighbouring Orlando PBS, which is also received in this area.

The EVENING AT THE POPS opened predictably enough with a light orchestral piece, in this case THE LIGHT CAVALRY OVERTURE by Suppé. Then followed, whether designedly or not, a familiar piece of music which was introduced as a traditional "Irish tune from County Derry" (better known as DANNY BOY, arranged by Percy Grainger).

Then conductor John Williams briskly came to the main theme of the first part of the evening's concert (the second half was devoted to Louis Armstrong).

> "Ever since I've been here at the Boston Pops, I have looked forward to tonight. That is because tonight's guest is not only one of my favourites but one to whom the word 'legend' genuinely applies. Perry Como, along with his good friend Bing Crosby, gave definition to the word 'legend' and to the word 'crooner', and when the two of them got together something very special happened."

The camera then cut to an extract from the famous 'Sixties television programme. Thereupon the orchestra struck up Bing's theme song and Mr. Como entered stage left to the applause of the audience. He sang the opening bars of WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT and then broke off, sighed and murmured, "I can't go any further with that one." He went on to say:

> "We are all here to pay a special tribute to that man who has been the father of all so called 'crooners' and stuff. We all feel the same. He was a kind of role model for all of us, and were it not for Bing, I would still be in Cannonsburg, PennsylVania cutting hair somewhere - which, at the prices they are getting today, wouldn't be a bad idea, would it?"

Mr. Como, formally dressed in tuxedo and accompanied by a chorus of six young ladies, then proceeded with his tribute to Bing in a song medley which took the following order:

(Cont. over....

BLUE SKIES/ BUT BEAUTIFUL / DEAR HEARTS AND GENTLE PEOPLE / ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE / SWINGING ON A STAR / PENNIES FROM HEAVEN / TOO-RAL-LOO-RAL-LOO-RAL /WHITE CHRISTMAS and ending with IN THE COOL, COOL, COOL OF THE EVENING, which had the typically variant ending:

> And if you're starting to sing
> And they sing about Bing,
> You can tell them I'll be there.

As Mr. Como went upstage to shake hands with Nick Perito, who accompanied him on the piano, and other members of the orchestra, including the conductor, John Williams, the audience rose for a standing ovation. Yet, despite this and the palpable warmth of their appreciation, the mood was strangely subdued with none of the stridency which is so often characteristic of such occasions. Indeed, there was nothing to prove.

Mr. Como, now the elder statesman of the "so-called crooners" commands respect wherever he goes. His consummate professionalism, musicianship and good taste are both assumed and guaranteed. That evening he was, I thought, in particularly good voice and what he offered was a fitting and memorable tribute to his idol, mentor and close friend.

One sensed that John Williams was not disappointed on the night - the one he admitted that he had looked forward to for so long.

Editor: A thoughtful first-hand account of what was undoubtedly a sincere, perhaps moving, tribute. Our thanks to Michael (usually of Chessington,Surrey) John Williams, conducting the Pops Orchestra now, is the celebrated guitarist.

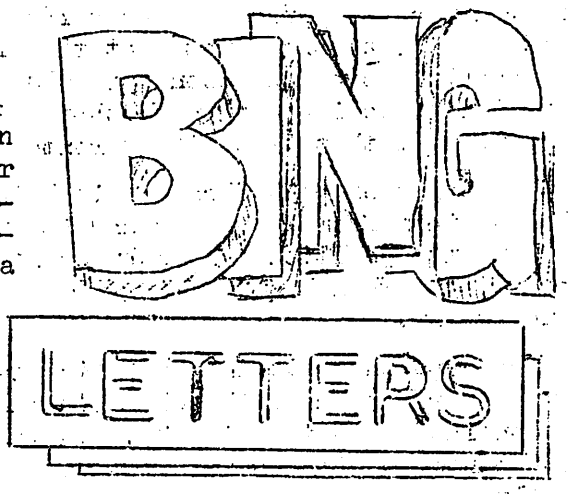
WE HAVE RECEIVED AN INTERESTING COMMUNICATION FROM THE BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, via its PRESIDENT, our good friend KEN TWISS: He writes:

> Our mail indicates a worldwide re-awakening of interest in Bing. We want to take advantage of this. I suggest every Bing club in the world and every appointed Active Representative does something to honour Bing some time during the week of April 29 to May 3rd. This will be a non-organised world event. Each head of every Bing society should do something to honour Bing during the week of his birth. It could be getting some publicity or an informal meeting - small or large. A social gathering to talk about Bing, or a dinner, or to enjoy a Crosby movie. With such gatherings worldwide at about the same time it could generate press/media interest and all clubs could benefit.

Fair enough - Owe've already announced two events for the spring but our really big affair - the Leeds - takes place in the autumn.... Members will of course, keep up their splendid "request" efforts to the principal record show presenters, both national and local.

Big events are scheduled in the States: The Historical Society is participating in the Washington State Centennial; the campaign to get a commemorative stamp in honour of Bing continues with radio plugs while there is the Society's own tribute to Bing in Tacoma between April 29-30....

The SILVER EAGLE concern has been plugging the 10th Anniversary Set on radio with tuneful excerpts, at a price of 29.95 dollars (about £17.50!) What a mystery has been the marketing of this set !



RAY MORRIS, 35 St. Ives Grove, Leeds, West Yorks, LS12 3RR

I can't resist adding to the argument on the song GEORGIA ON MY MIND. The matter may be trivial but not entirely Bing orientated but I am positive the song refers to the State of Georgia and not a young lady.

I have the verse, which is seldom if ever heard, and let me quote the last two lines:

"Some day when when blossoms fall,
I'll go back to Georgia,
'Cause that's where I belong."

The bits about "other arms" and "other eyes" are used metaphorically, I am sure. Then there is the line "The road leads back to you. True the words are a little ambiguous but I have never been in any doubt as to the meaning.

Editor: Personally, I would agree but its for sure nobody can ask Hoagy Carmichael now! For a start, the girl's name is invariably GEORGINA, or some modern misses use GEORGY. But never, I would say, Georgia.

That aside, however, Mr. Morris has an item that should have appeared in TRADING POST had it been on a separate sheet (he said slyly!) WANTED: Sheet music of LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR which includes the verse; also one of JUST AN ECHO. Will naturally pay the price asked. I do have a copy of LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR but it doesn't include the verse, and this is one of those songs where the verse is better than the refrain in my opinion.

JIMMY GLOVER, 14 The Meads, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 4JW: I watch the Channel 4 programme COUNTDOWN - the programme where contestants are presented with nine letters from which they try to make as long a word as possible. The man in charge is Richard Whiteley and there is a pretty young woman who checks the words in a dictionary. Sitting next to her is a "celebrity" who should help to make the programme more entertaining. On this occasion the celebrity was Clement Freud.

The word 'groaner' was checked and disallowed as being non-existent. Clement Freud remarked that he thought Frank Sinatra would be upset at the word 'groaner' not being allowed. Richard Whiteley suggested that Clement really meant Bing Crosby who was known as The Groaner. Freud then remarked that they all sounded the same to him. Surely he should consult an T.N.T. specialist? As for not allowing the word 'groaner' as legitimate - it just doesn't make sense to me.

Editor: Or us - apart from Bing's Hope-bequeathed soubriquet, anyone who groans must be a groaner, surely? But here again, Freud is one of that not inconsiderable army of people who are "TV personalities" - with no discernible claim to any distinction. They seem to toil not, neither do they spin; they cannot sing, play, juggle or ride a unicycle. Yet somehow they catch someone's eye or ear and do the professionals out of a job. Wogan is a principal in that army, too.

REG BRISTO,
7 Greenmeadow Close,
St. Dials,
CWMBRAN,
GWENT, NP44 4PJ.

TREVOR WAGSTAFF, 49 Dawes Avenue, Hornchurch, Essex, RM12 6AJ: Reference your views on John McNicholas's CHRONOLOGICAL series, I feel you should encourage members to purchase these records, a n unique series, beautifully produced. You make the point that the albums are too expensive and are - understandably - over the moon with CDs as I am, although a lot of the early 30s material is coming out on CD there will numerous duplications, and more, so I am sure all that is on the Chronological will not appear on CD.

I get two copies of each Chronological issue (one for a friend) costing £16.2I. I could get them from HMV at around £6.80p each but feel it is good to get them direct in mint condition from John McNicholas. A mid-price CD costs £7.99 or thereabouts. When I see a Bing CD all sense of responsibility disappears and I go and buy it. - - - - - - -

I think perhaps there is an apathetic view that we won't live long enough to see even a large part of the Chronological series issued. I would be happy to see it continue into the mid-40s. In its present form, also, not CD but perhaps John could be persuaded to put another two songs on each LP, which would help. - - - - - -

Editor: I would love to say: "Fair and reasoned comment", but I'm not sure - what Trevor is aiming at! Even if £7.99 is a fair mid-price for a CD there are a large number which do not cost even that - without even mentioning Pickwic . I merely said that it was sad that John had been overtaken by technology - which surely is undeniable?. And as Fred Reynolds has pointed out elsewhere in this issue (even tho' he strongly supports CHON.) most veteran members HAVE this material - from the days when they used to (at great expense) order Whiteman LPs from the States. Its okay if one can afford to buy everything on sight, as Trevor suggests ("I lose all sense of responsibility") but many of us cannot, and need to rationalise. - - - - -

> I'm not apathetic about not seeing the end of the series. I'm POSITIVE I cannot for at the present rate of progress I've worked it out I shall need to reach 110! I am merely storing up headaches for my heirs! They will find it easier to dispose of Compact Discs! - - - -

And - this really is baffling - Trevor seems to suggest that the HMV shops sell less than mint condition LPs? - Cor..... - It IS interesting that the HMV Shops stock these albums; the question of their distribution has been raised elsewhere in this issue. They are never seen in South Wales - and according to mail, there are vast areas which never see them.

I maintain a switch to CD is the true answer to what has turned out to be a serious setback to a highly meritorious, even inspired, project.

NEIL ROBINSON, 19 Alder Grove, Stapenhill, Burton-on-Trent, DE15 9QR: - -

I know we must bend to progress but I am still very much a shellac and needle man. After all that's how we first heard the wonderful voice of Bing. In fact, only a couple of months ago I bought a new musical instrument - a 1930s Academy wind-up gramophone - complete with two doors! Visitors are always pleased to hear the variations in sound, and comment on the quality of the reproduction when I inform them of the age of the 78 being played. However, even tho' I have not yet joined the growing band of CD converts, I did buy the disc of HIGH SOCIETY in Boots - the price of £3.99 seemed too good to leave it in the shop. - - - - - -

Editor: Well, we ain't gonna change our edict: Everyone gets what they want in the way they waht from Crosbyana. And while we certainly share a warm nostalgia for the way we used to listen to Bing aeons ago to prefer that kind of reproduction to CDs is tantamount, we think, to preferring candles and paraffin lamps to electric light ! We prefer to hear Bing in the best possible quality - but,

it need be said again, everyone to their taste!

But what did set us back was that Neil came across a CD of HIGH SOCIETY! This we've heard of or seen... and it happens that we are in the process of producing a draft of CDs so far issued. Details of this one would be appreciate, i.e. where made, label, cat. no and anything else relevant. So often CDs are prepared in one country, made in a second - and sold in a third!

ARNOLD POPE, 9 Hawkstone Avenue, Whitefield, Manchester,

I was musing recently on the different aspects of popular music obtaining today, and got to thinking as how, by virtue of their early demise, many artists have become cult figures - Nat King Cole, Jim Reeves, Glenn Miller, Buddy Holly, and assuredly Elvis Presley, and their record sales have reflected this. One wonders how Bing would have fared in this context had he completely retired from show-biz around 1955? At least we wouldn't be hearing those 'not so good' (I daren't put it any stronger than that!) tracks on Radio-2.

Editor: You will gather that Arnold is a 30s man, though extending to the 40s and a little of the 50s! One must agree that while it doesn't do the deceased much good, his exploits when alive do lead to the "cult" syndrome. We've often thought that Bing was around so long, became so much a fixture on the scene, that he was taken for granted. But - we're glad he was.... Perhaps the next letter is appropriate!

DENNIS SAVILLE, 14 Penderry Rise, Catford, London, SE6 1HA:

I wonder how many members caught Val Doonican as a guest of Gloria Hunniford's on December 19 last? Val was asked about autographs and he related that his idol was, and always has been, Bing Crosby but he had never had the privilege of working with him. He had, of course, always wanted to meet him and one day he had a phone call inviting him to go to Scotland and play golf with Bing. The day came and they played; during the round a man in the crowd sent his son over to Val to get his autograph. He duly obliged then the boy was heard to say: "Is the other man famous, too?" Lovely story.

JOHN UNWIN, 47 West Way, Broadstone, Dorset, BH18 9LJ:

Another year drifts by..overall 1988 was not a bad year for Crosby fans with plenty of reissues and a few alternate 'takes' we've not heard before. Pity some issues had to be spoiled - for me anyway - by the introduction of echo. The pressing of the mono button on my equipment fortunately seems to remove most of this menace. Let's hope the Chronological issues don't go the same way.

Editor: The engineers call it "reverberation"! Personally I don't dislike a modicum but overdone it is odious. One of the Corals is in the latter class and spoils the album. But, you've already read that piece in the PENNIES FROM HEAVEN Notes (Pro-ART CD) that reverberation was added to compensate for the small studios used in the Depression! A more preposterous statement it would be difficult to imagine - relating the size of recording studios to the Depression. Why, as Bing told us once, they often used disused warehouses!

GIRVAN PATTERSON, 18 Coolibar Avenue, Seaford, 3198, Victoria, Australia:

I think it has been a fairly good year for Bing (1988), mainly on Compact Disc. I don't think any of us thought that so much of the early Bing would be available on this technology so soon if at all. Its most reassuring to know that there are those who feel its important to get these historic recordings put out in mint condition for collectors and those curious about

pop music's origins. After all, when you think about it, Bing wasn't just a part of pop music history, he STARTED pop music. Little do the present generation realise that all the weird sounds and weird characters they idolize and worship, owe it all to Bing Crosby. Poor old Bing - I don't suppose he dreamed what he was starting!

ABC TV showed WAIKIKI WEDDING on 14th January last - first time on local TV for at least 20 years!

Editor: We warmly endorse what Girvan says about the early Bing on CD - and incidentally, its worth nothing that while we tend to think of America as apathetic about Bing, CBS have seen fit to put out that marvellous 1927-34 collection with no sign of it appearing here. Then again, the States is so vast it makes the UK look parochial! And its difficult enough to get publicity here for our affairs - so what can it be like in America? We're sure there is a vast, untapped, mass of people who would like to see and hear more of Bing there - but, look who's in charge of entertainment. And, remember, the fast-buck syndrome of the modern "pop" industry....

Its true Bing almost certainly started the pop industry, albeit in a vastly different quality. When the Wright brothers invented and developed the aeroplane how could they know that the time would soon come when other men would use planes to drop atomic bombs on civilians?

We find ourselves wondering if those marvellous Mack Sennett songs could be worth transfer to CD? We never cease to mentally thank Sennett for the legacy he provided with those songs, most of which did not appear on commercial record..... AUF WIEDERSEHEN, MY DEAR, DREAM HOUSE,, EV'RY TIME MY HEART BEATS....FOR YOU....

RON DANIELS, 1 Oxford Avenue, Victor Harbor, South Australia, 5211:

Latest find in the CD department is HIGH SOCIETY (the original soundtrack, it says). Its on Ce De International CD66056, made in EEC - would that be the European Common community thing? No mention of Capitol Records who had the original rights. It appears to be the later stereo release which omits Bing's telling line "you must be one of the newer fellas" delivered, of course, to Sinatra.

You asked last issue who was Cass Daly,(guest on KMH)- she appeared in half a dozen of Bing's films, notably in HERE COMES THE GROOM - usually playing herself, a sort of hill-billy version of Martha Raye - not unlike Judy Canova. Another guest, RAGS RAGLAND, was a comedian who came into movies from burlesque. He was a buddy of Jackie Gleason and Phil Silvers, he did a comedy act with the latter on the night-club circuits.

Thought you might be interested in the excerpt from THE JACKIE GLEASON STORY, out in paper-back here in Australia. Apparently Bing and Jackie were in the habit of meeting in Toots Shor's bar in Hollywood for a noggin or two in the evening.

Editor: Our Aussie friends, always welcome, always knowledgeable. The excerpt referred to is certainly of interest. It reads:

> "HOW SWEET IT IS" - the Jackie Gleason Story by James Bacon, St. Martins Press, New York. Copyright 1985:
>
> One day in 1952, Jackie and Bing drank through the cocktail hour at 'Toots' then went over to the El Morrocco for a late-night drink. As soon as Bing walked into El Morrocco, Jackie recalls, the band started playing WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT. When Bing heard that he walked up to the band

stand and started singing with them. By the time he was through he had sung about twenty of the songs he had made famous through the years. What a night that was for the customers of El Morocco. I never heard of Bing ever doing that any place else," said Jackie.

Editor: Nice little sidelight on Bing. We don't seem to have heard much about Jackie Gleason but he must have been quite a friend of Bing's. It was he, if we remember rightly, who appeared with Bing in the latter's very last Christmas TV show, the one made in England with Ron Moody and David Bowie.....

GORDON HOOPER, 54 Devenport Rd., Worthing, Sussex, BN11 2SW: I am now into the CD things and was quite pleased because I thought I was up-to-date but I see in the December magazine you say there are more than 60 CDs with more to come....

Editor: Most curious, for several readers have made the same error as Gordon. We didn't say there were 60 CDs; this was a statement in a speech to the record industry in the States. It happens we are compiling a list (before its too late and there are too many) and we have listed 33 CDs. We'll shortly print it and invite additions/corrections.

OVERLEAF we present two more of our historic reproductions, produced and researched for us by JEAN-PAUL FRERAULT of Canada. Truly historic, too. The upper one is just a shade over 50 years old, and shows Bing on the screen and brother Bob on the stage - a family affair at New York's famous Paramount. The days of wonderful cine-variety, which spread to Britain giving you the best of both worlds - screen and personal performances. And at very modest prices, too. And coincidence, note our friend CASS DALEY is included!

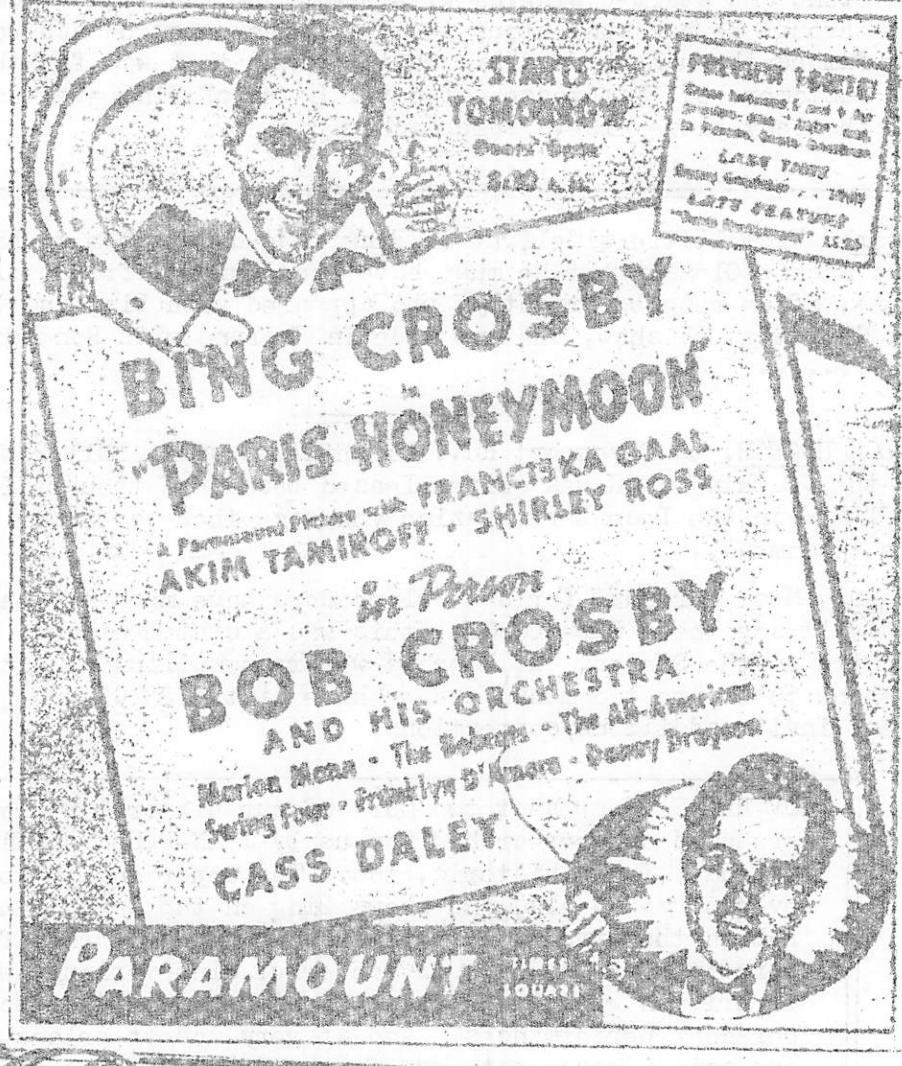
The lower shows that Bing was on stage at the Times Square Paramount, while his 'rival' was at downtown Brooklyn Paramount. Note that the Mills Brothers were on the Brooklyn Bill with Russ, while among others the "poet of the organ" JESSE CRAWFORD was with Bing. The film is of interest also. LEW AYRES was the original Dr. Kildare, with Lionel Barrymore as the older irascible doctor. These were remade more than 30 years later for TV with Richard Chamberlain and Raymond Massey taking the two parts of Lew and Lionel. Coincidentally, the original Kildare films are being shown in the afternoons on Channel 4.

TONY STRONG, 49 Antonine Gate, St. Albans, Herts, AL3 4JD has just joined us, albeit is a keen admirer of Bing. And his particular interest is radio shows, post-War and thro' to the mid-50s. This takes in the Philco, Chesterfield and GE shows. He will be most grateful if anyone can help him in his quest.

MERVYN THOMAS, 52 Gratwick Rd., Worthing, Sussex, BN11 4BH: Did you hear John Dunne's programme the other day? He was talking to Lucinda Lampton and she told John she met Bing in London and boldly invited him out to lunch. To her astonishment he accepted! Seems she is a great fan....

Editor: Here's where I show my appalling ignorance again: who is Lucinda Lampton? One of those show-jumpers ?

NEW YORK TIMES, JANUARY 24, 1939.



NEW YORK TIMES 20 DEC 1931 SUNDAY

TRADING POST

Entries here are free for all items of Crosbyana, e.g. wants/disposals of records, tapes, videos, books, pictures &c. though it must be noted that we cannot advertise the dubbing of commercial albums and records. This puts us on thin ice (we have been warned before) for several record company executives read BING and the prospect of legal proceedings is something we are NOT prepared to entertain or even risk. Confine entries to a maximum of six lines. If long lists of numbers &c. are involved, invite a SAE for same. There is a nominal charge of £1 for non-Crosby items. All items are printed in good faith; we rely upon members satisfying themselves they are making a satisfactory deal and can accept no responsibility in the matter.

KEN MERRY 28 The Avenue, Bessacarr, Doncaster, S. Yorks DN4 5JX: Has for sale unplayed copy of RENDEZVOUS (RCA Int. 1047 later FANCY MEETING YOU HERE, plus some interesting C90 cassettes - SAE for details.

STAN WOODFORD, 6 Mariam Gdns, Hornchurch, Essex, RM12 6QA (Phone Hornchurch 45049) have completed an additional 3-hr video compilation of 58 Bing film songs. The mix is different with some additions SAE for listing, VHS only.

MRS. ELLEN KNIGHT, 57 Burlington Rd., West Bromwich, West Mids., B70 6LE (Phone 021-525-7285) has picked up 2 copies of the 1950s READERS DIGEST containing the abridged version of CALL ME LUCKY . ' is willing to pass on one of them.

ALEX O'HARA, 11 Paterson Place, Bonnybridge, Stirlingshire, FK4 1BE has a couple of Sinatra albums he would exchange for a Bing (or Bings!) plus some double albums of Bing for sale/exchange. SAE please.

FOR SALE: Between 120-130 Bing audio cassettes, part of the late Bob Jones's collection) ALL PROCEEDS FOR BOB'S WIDOW. All are excellent quality, SAE for complete lists and prices: GEORGE HARWOOD, 5 GLEBE RD., HEMINGFORD GREY, HUNTINGDONW, CAMBS. PE18 9DS

(Editor: That Bob compiled these cassettes is virtually a guarantee of excellent quality and content. Bob's tragic, premature, death last year left his young wife Carol and two children. Patronage of these cassettes would be mutually beneficial.)

RICHARD HART, 6 Torwood Close, Torquay, Devon, TQ1 1EH would like contact with an American member with a view to mutual purchase/exchange of Compact Discs issued here and in the States.

WANTED: VHS video of THE COUNTESS OF MONTE CRISTO (Sonja Henie) on Portland Film Budget video relesse - PHILLIP REEVES, Coxwalls Cottage, Ash End, Henstridge, Templecombe, Somerset, BA8 OPN (Phone (0963) 63497.

WANTED: LP or tape of GREAT ITALIAN LOVE SONGS, 20 original hits by famous artists, K-Tel NE303. Any reasonable price paid: C.H.CULLEY, 25 The Curlews, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk Phone (0284) 752136

MIKE MUMBY.59 Columbia Rd. GRIMSBY South Humberside, DN32 8EB wants to know if there is a video of the Michael Parkinson interview(s) with Bing - no doubt with a view to obtaining a copy. (Editor: Were video recorders prolific at that time?)

JIM HOUGHTON, 58 Inglemere Rd., Rock Ferry, Birkenhead, Merseyside, L42 4QP: WANTS: Pen pals who are admirers of the late MATT MONRO. My needs are taped interviews of Mat - rare records - in fact, anything apertaining to Matt.

BINGANG: magazine of CLUB CROSBY in America is available in Europe. For details SAE to KEN CROSSLAND, 9 ARDEN DRIVE, DORRIDGE, SOLIHULL, W. Mids B93 8LP

Similarly, KEITH PARKINSON (address page 3) can provide details of membership of the Australian VICTORIAN BING CROSBY SOCIETY.

BRIAN JONES, 1 Gelihaf Road, Fleur-de-Lis, Blackwood, Gwent, NP2 1XJ:

WANTED: Bing's CALL ME LUCKY in original dust-cover, and LPs and single discs by DOROTHY PROVINE, and NORMAN BROOKS (the Jolson impersonator) Also any Brunswick catalogue circa 1950-54. Your price paid for any of these items.

AFTERTHOUGHTS ON LES GAYLOR'S NEWS: Itwas reported that LEE SIMMONDS, whom Les was introduced to said that RCA had compiled the tapes for a Bing-Bob Scobey Compact Disc. Can it be that RCA are unaware that most of this material has already appeared on the Italian JOKER label in the series THE ENTERTAINERS? This was, and is, widely available in the UK. - CD of course, as well as LP.

Leslie 's assistance to Pickwick in the way of an acceptable track of THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME hit his local press in a fair way with an excellent feature entitled HITCH OVER ALBUM BUT LESLIE HAS IT TAPED..

Les is also intent on taking it in next time he is told what digital re-mastering is! We asked last issue if there was anyone able to enlighten us - but no response, alas. However, Decca has issued a most interesting brochure, entitled "THE DECCA STORY" From Portable Gramophones to Compact Discs. It includes, in passing, reference to the American legend, BING CROSBY, joining the label from Brunswick, and also includes a picture of JUNE IN JANUARY/WITH EVERY BREATH I TAKE notice at the time of release in the early 30s. Its surprising to read that the name Decca first appeared in 1914 when their portable gramophones were actually used in the trenches of the First World War ! Then it was a private firm and not the giant it has become.

Does this help? Quoting"Once audio signals derived from the microphone mixing-desk have been fed into the system, they are encoded into the digital format and remain thus throughout the editing and any necessary remixing or equalising process, only finally reverting to analogue musical waveforms in the user's CD player....with digital recordings there is absolutely no degradation when a copy is made. The copying process concerns not music but encoded binary digits, which are vastly more robust than the audio signals they represent and may be replicated for many generations without change or increased (extraneous) noise." - to which we can only say: Cor! But we do know is that digital recording cuts out tape...just as tape was a vast improvement on the old cutting machines in recording, so digital recording is an even bigger improvement over tape.

As is customary, our final two pages take us further along the 10-year-span of the songs in KRAFT MUSIC HALL.

Until June....Adios amigos !

19 August 1943

WHAT DO YOU DO IN THE INFANTRY? Bing, Music Maids & Charioteers.
THE RIGHT KIND OF LOVE - Bing and Trudy Erwin
PAPER DOLL - Bing & Music Maids.
NEVADA - Bing
Them there eyes - Charioteers.

26 August 1943

Comin' in on a wing and a prayer - Bing, Music Maids & Charioteers
PEOPLE WILL SAY WE'RE IN LOVE -Bing and Trudy Erwin
KENTUCKY BABE - Bing & Charioteers
SUNDAY, MONDAY OR ALWAYS - Bing
Don't cry baby - Charioteers.

2 September 1943 Guest: Frank McHugh

OH! WHAT A BEAUTIFUL MORNING - Bing, Trudy Erwin & Music Maids
RIDIN' HERD ON A CLOUD - Bing
PISTOL PACKIN' MAMA - Charioteers.
I'VE GOT SIXPENCE (parody) Bing, Frank McHugh & Ken Carpenter
IF I HAD MY WAY - Bing & Charioteers
NEVADA - Bing.

9 September 1943 Guests: Falstaff Openshaw, Phil Silvers.

COMIN' IN ON A WING AND A PRAYER
WAIT FOR ME MARY - Bing with Trudy Erwin
Brother Bill - Charioteers.
STARDUST - Phil Silvers, clarinet and Bing
ITS ALWAYS YOU
BASIN ST. BLUES - Bing & Charioteers.

16 September 1943 Guests: Falstaff Openshaw, Jinx Falkenberg

ROAD TO VICTORY
PEOPLE WILL SAY WE'RE IN LOVE - Bing and Trudy Erwin
PUT YOUR ARMS AROUND ME HONEY
I DUG A DITCH (IN WICHITA) - The Charioteers.
IF YOU PLEASE.

23 September 1943 Guest: George Murphy

WHAT DO YOU DO IN THE INFANTRY?
I heard you cried last night - Trudy Erwin
Pistol Packin' Mamam- The Charioteers
I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS.
CUDDLE UP A LITTLE CLOSER, LOVEY MINE
SUNDAY, MONDAY OR ALWAYS

30 SEPTEMBER 1943

VICT'RY POLKA. (Cont...

POINCIANA (Song of the tree)
Swing low, sweet chariot - Charioteers
THE WAY YOU LOOK TONIGHT - Bing & Trudy Erwin
VICT'RY POLKA (parody) with Phil Silvrrs
IF YOU PLEASE

7 October 1943 Guest: Lucille Ball

THE ROAD TO VICTORY
I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS (If only in my dreams)
Nobody's sweetheart - Charioteers
ONE ALONG - Bing with Trudy Erwin
SUNDAY, MONDAY OR ALWAYS

14 October 1943 Guest: Jack Douglas

VICTR' POLKA
OH!. WHAT A BEAUTIFUL MORNING (Bing & Trudy)
I DUG A DITCH (in Wichita) Charioteers.
BY THE LIGHT OF THE SILV'RY MOON
A YANK IN A TANK
POINCIANA (Song of the tree)

21 October 1943 Guest: Cass Daley

ANCHORS AWEIGH
RIDIN' HERD ON A CLOUD
PISTOL PACKIN' MAMA (with Charioteers)
WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT MEETS THE GOLD OF THE DAY
They're either too young or too old - Cass Daley
HOW SWEET YOU ARE.

28 October 1943)
4 November 1943) Bing did not appear on
11 November 1943) these dates; brother
18 November 1943) Bob hosted the show.
25 November 19 3)

2 December 1943 Guest: Ed 'Archie' Gardner

VICT'RY POLKA
HOW SWEET YOU ARE
WAY DOWN YONDER IN NEW ORLEANS (with Charioteers)
MY IDEAL (with Trudy Erwin)
I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS (if only in my dreams) - Bing, Music Maids & Charioteers.

9 December 1943 Guest; Lucille Ball

PAPER DOLL
My shining hour (Trudy Erwin)
Jesus is a rock in the weary land (Charioteers)
WONDERFUL ONE
POINCIANA (Song of the tree)

16 December 1943 Guests: Phil Silvers Joan Davis

PISTOL PACKIN' MAMA (with Charioteers)
OH! WHAT A BEAUTIFUL MORNING (with Trudy)
I USED TO LOVE YOU BUT ITS ALL OVER NOW
Shoo-Shoo Baby (Charioteers.
WHITE CHRISTMAS.

23 December 1943

ADESTE FIDELIS
MY HEART TELLS ME (with Trudy Erwin)
Ezekiel Saw the Wheeel (Charioteers)
SWEET LEILANI
SILENT NIGHT

30 December 1943

HAPPY HOLIDAY
AULD LANG SYNE (entire company)
THE WAY YOU LOOK TONIGHT (with Trudy)
A SLip of the Lip (Charioteers)
AS TIME GOES BY
He really loved me (till the All-Clear came - Cass Daley)
POINCIANA (Song of the tree)

6 Jabuary 1944 Guests: Wm. Frawley
Nan Wynn
SHOO-SHOO BABY
Speak Low (Nan Wynn)
I dug a ditch (in Wichita)(Charioteers)
MY IDEAL
CAROLINA IN THE MORNING (Bing with guests)
MY HEART TELLS ME

13 January 1944 Guests: Geo.Murphy
Jane Frazee)
SAN FERNANDO VALLEY
Shoo-Shoo Baby (Jane Frazee)
Straighten up and fly right(Charioteers)
IT HAD TO BE YOU (Bing and guests)
CANDLELIGHT AND WINE.

20 January 1944 Guest: Dale Evans

WHAT DO YOU DO IN THE INFANTRY?
Besame mucho (Dale Evans)
Mairzy Doats (Charioteers)
YOU BROUGHT A NEW KIND OF LOVE TO ME
THE SURREY WITH THE FRING ON TOP (with Dale Evans)
MY IDEAL.

27 January 1944 Guests: Wm. Bendix
Gloria de Haven
SHOE-SHOO BABY
I've got a crush on you (Gloria De-Haven)
This is the army, Mr. Jones(Charioteers)
ONE SWEET LETTER FROM YOU
CANDLELIGHT AND WINE

3 February 1944 Ghests: Donald O'Connor,Marilyn
SAN FERNANDO VALLEY Maxwell
Tess's torch song (Marilyn)
Little David (Charioteers)
SMALL FRY (with Donald O'Connor
I'LL BE SEEING YOU

10 February 1944 Guests: Mischa Auer
Marilyn Maxwell
SHOO-SHOO BABY
I wish I may, I wish I might (Marilyn)
Mairzy Doats (Charioteers)
SEPTEMBER SONG
POINCIANA (Song of the tree)

17 February 1944 Guests: Cass
Marilyn Maxwell
IOWA
A LOT IN COMMON WITH YOU (with Marilyn)
Leanin' on the Lord (Charioteers)
AFTER YOU'VE GONE
Corns for my country (Cass Daley)
I'LL BE SEEING YOU.

24 February 1944 Guests: Phil Silvers
Marilyn Maxwell
SAN FERNANDO VALLEY
I never knew (Marilyn)
G.I.Jive (Charioteers)
ITS ONLY A PAPER MOON
Without a song (Phil Silvers)
I'LL BE SEEING YOU

2 March 1944 Guests: Lucille Ball
Marilyn Maxwell
A HOT TIME IN THE TOWN OF BERLIN
THE SURREY WITH THE FRINGE ON TOP (with Marilyn)
Sing a song of sixpence (Charioteers)
THANKS
AMOG

9 March 1944 Guest: Geo. Murphy

THE BOMBARDIER SONG
MEXICALI ROSE
Witness for my Lord (Charioteers)
I COULDN'T SLEEP A WINK LAST NIGHT (With Geo. Murphy)
TWO SLEEPY PEOPLE (with Marilyn)
GOING MY WAY.

16 March 1944) Bing not present; again
23 March 1944) brother Bob hosted

30 March 1944 Guest: Geo. Murphy

HOT TIME IN THE TOWN OF BERLIN
TAKE IT EASY (with Marilyn)
The old Music Master (Charioteers)
ON MOONLIGHT BAY (with Charioteers)
OH! WHAT A BEAUTIFUL MORNING (parody with Geo. Murphy)
AMOR.

6 April 1944 Guests: Kraft Choral Club

ITS LOVE, LOVE, LOVE.
SOLDIERS OF GOD
EASTER PARADE (with Marilyn)
EASTER CAROL OF THE LAMB & ALLELUIA (Kraft Choral Club)
Stardust (Charioteers)
GOING MY WAY.